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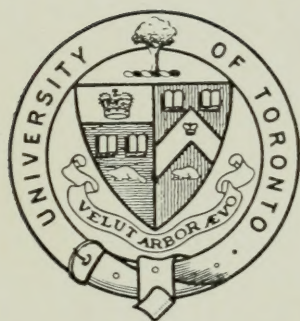
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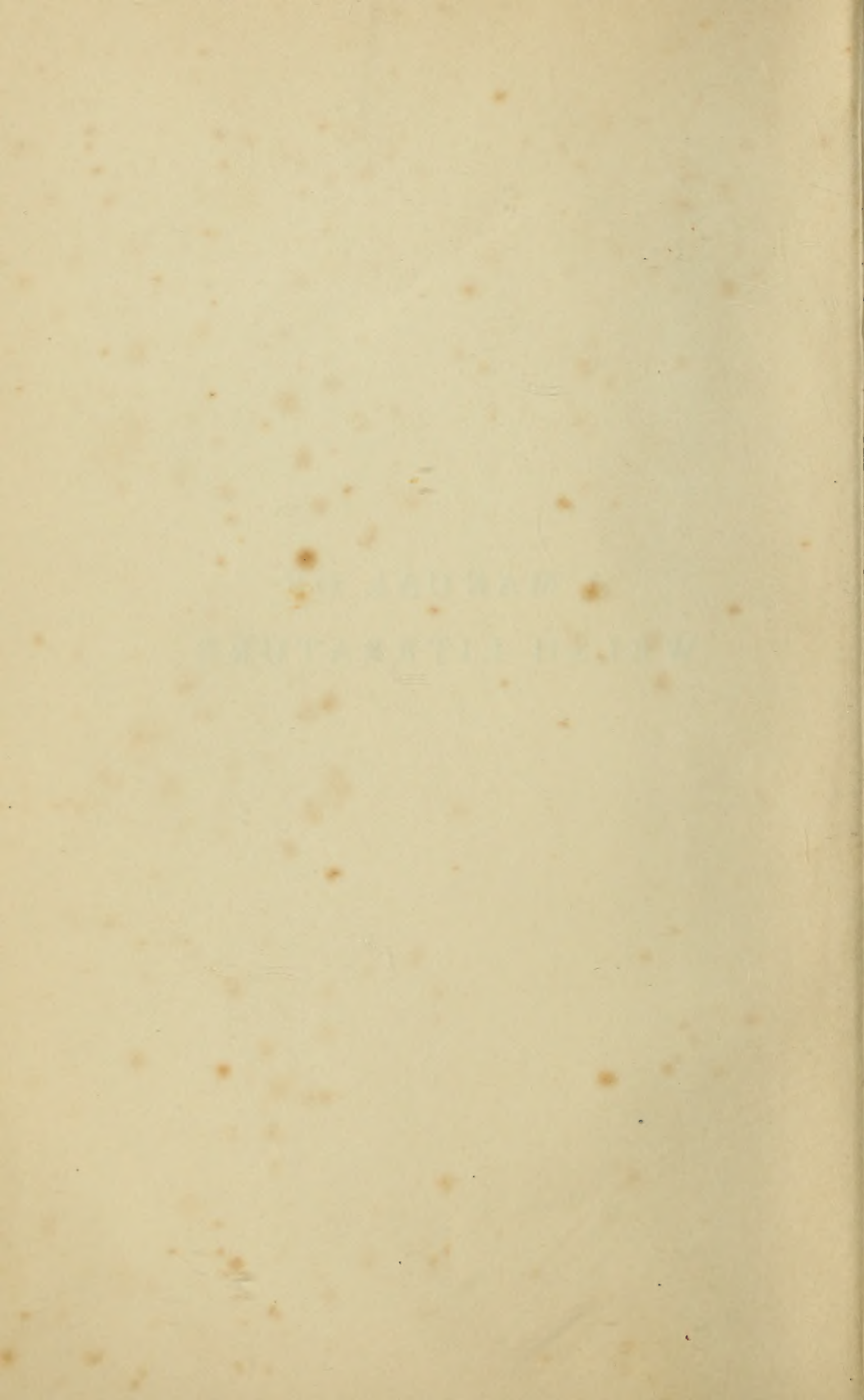


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A MANUAL OF  
WELSH LITERATURE





# A MANUAL OF WELSH LITERATURE, #

Containing a Brief Survey of the Works  
of the Chief Bards and Prose Writers  
from the Sixth Century to the end of  
the Eighteenth. °

BY THE

REV. J. C. MORRICE, M.A.

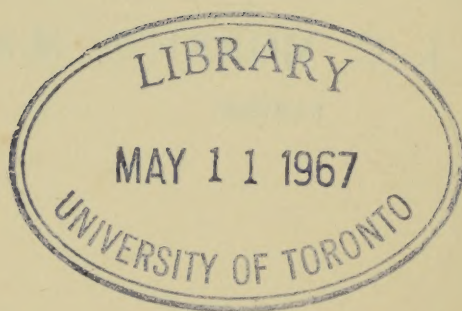
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TO  
PRINCIPAL SIR HARRY REICHEL, M.A., LL.D.  
SOMETIME FELLOW OF ALL SOULS', OXFORD  
FELLOW OF JESUS COLLEGE, OXFORD  
WHO HAS GUIDED THE DESTINIES OF THE  
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF NORTH WALES  
WITH SUCH DISTINGUISHED SUCCESS  
FOR A QUARTER OF A CENTURY  
THE AUTHOR, AN OLD STUDENT, RESPECTFULLY  
BEGS TO DEDICATE THIS BOOK



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## P R E F A C E

THIS little book was undertaken at the request of many who urged that there was no Handbook of Welsh Literature, at a popular price, which could be used by those who wished to make a general acquaintance with the subject, when time and opportunities prevented their undertaking a more detailed study.

It is also written with the hope that Welsh boys and girls in the Higher Forms of our Intermediate Schools, and Junior Students at the University Colleges, may have within their reach a general outline of the Literature of Wales, before they engage in the closer study required by the higher examinations of the University of Wales.

The writer experienced the need of such a work in the early part of his own career, when a Welsh library was difficult of access, and books in which the treasures of our literature were locked were not procurable, even when a slender purse could supply the wherewithal.

The following works have been freely consulted in its

preparation: Skene's *Four Ancient Books of Wales*, Stephens's *Literature of the Kymry*, *The Myvyrian Archæology*, Gweirydd ap Rhys's *Hanes Llenyddiaeth Gymreig*, Charles Ashton's *Hanes Llenyddiaeth Gymreig*, Wilkins's *History of the Literature of Wales*, the volumes of *Reprints* issued by the Guild of Graduates of the University of Wales, *Ceinion Llenyddiaeth Cymru*, *Llyfryddiaeth y Cymry*, *Enwogion y Ffydd*, the *Greal*, the *Geninen*, the *Traethodydd*, Williams's *Eminent Welshmen*, *Dictionary of National Biography*, Gwallter Mechain's works, and several works issued by the *Cymmrodorion Society*. Many MSS. at Cardiff and the British Museum have also supplied valuable information.

I am proud to acknowledge a special debt to Professor John Morris Jones, one that is far deeper than any I could have contracted by the mere use of his writings, great as that is. For three years I was privileged to enjoy his lectures on the Welsh language and its literature at the University College of North Wales, and ever since cordial personal intercourse with Professor Jones has been an unfailing source of stimulus and enlightenment. I regret that this little work is not a worthier tribute to his teaching and influence.

It is also my pleasant duty to express my special gratitude to the Rev. T. Shankland, the Welsh Librarian of the University College of North Wales, who has done



## PREFACE

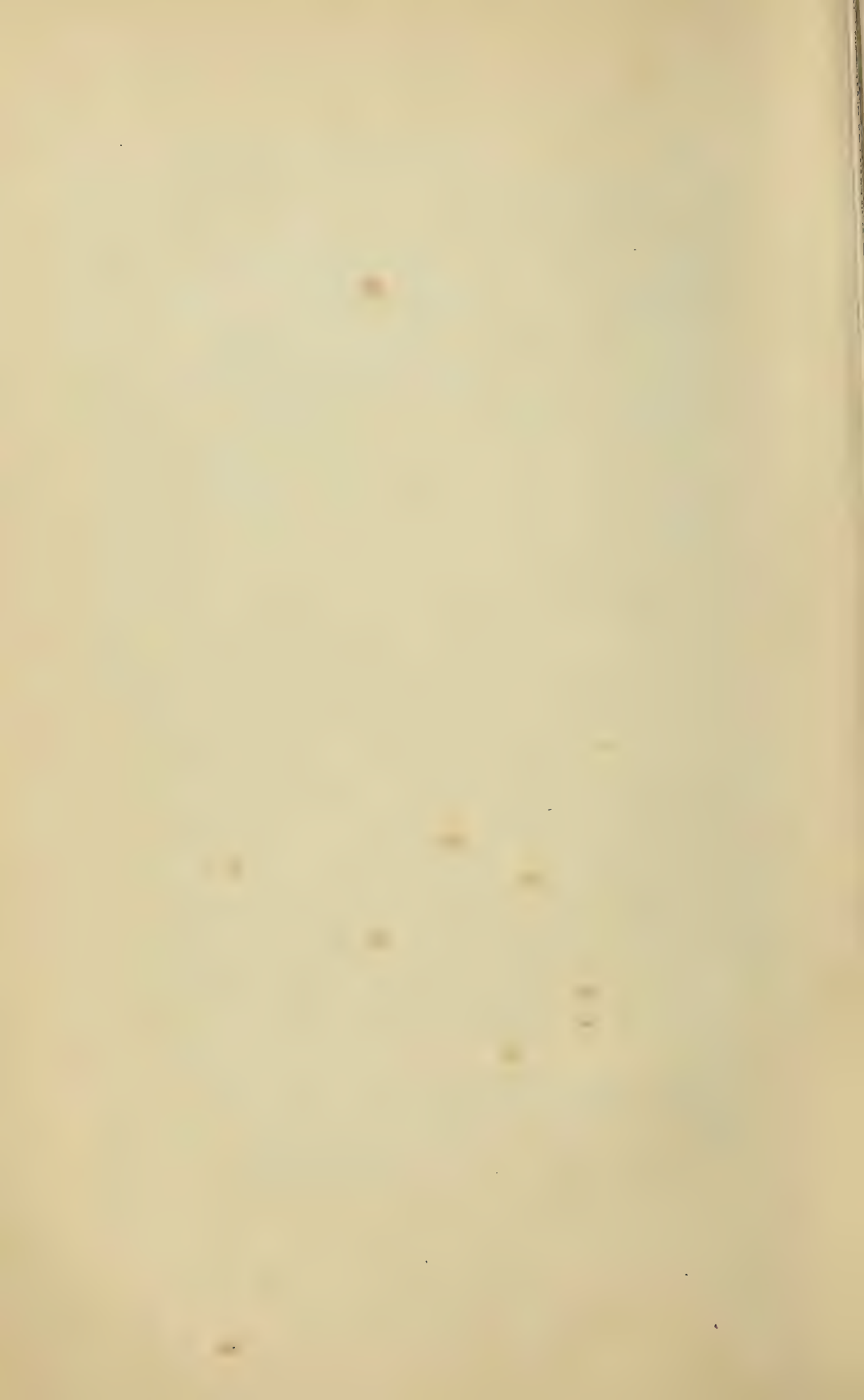
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me the favour to read the work in proof, and has made many valuable corrections and additions in the dates, titles, and biographies of this little work, the results of his own researches in Welsh Bibliography.

Some of the matter was delivered in the form of lectures by the writer at the University College of South Wales and Monmouthshire, 1902-3.

J. C. MORRICE.

BANGOR, 1909.



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# A MANUAL OF WELSH LITERATURE

## CHAPTER I

### THE BARDS OF THE SIXTH CENTURY

CÆSAR, Strabo, Diodorus Siculus and other writers affirm that the Britons had bards who composed and sang poetry at the very early period in which they lived; and, such being the case, there seems no reason to doubt that some fragments of our literature have been handed down to us from the sixth century, as has been claimed, and that such well-known names as Aneurin, Taliesin, Llywarch Hên, and Myrddin, together with others not so well known, Kian, Talhaearn, Meugant, and Kywryd, were not the myths that some would have us suppose, but really flourished at the period assigned to them. Care must be taken, however, not to accept as authentic all the writings attributed to these bards. Much, if not most, of the poetry that bears their name is undoubtedly spurious and of much later date, but there are sometimes whole poems, and at other times fragments of poems, which bear marks of undoubted antiquity, and can be reasonably supposed to be as genuine as the works of some prose writers of that far-off time.

The works of later bards—for example, those of the twelfth century—who eulogised their work and sometimes quoted them, show how firmly the sixth-century bards had fixed themselves in the imagination of their countrymen; and work which had bridged the intervening centuries, with all their troubled history, must have been of some merit.

Of these early bards, the first in order of importance is **Aneurin**, a name which a modern scholar has identified with the Roman name *Honorinus*. Aneurin was a Briton of Manau Gododin, a part of Strathclyde, and his reputation rests mainly upon his great poem the 'Gododin,' which relates an expedition of the Britons against a place named Cattraeth, where they sustained a crushing reverse, partly accounted for, according to the poet's own showing, by their drunken dissipation on the night previous to the battle. Aneurin himself either actively participated in this battle, or was an interested spectator, for his narrative is that of an eye-witness, and he suffered personally from the reverse by being cast into prison. The 'Gododin' is in verse partly lyric and partly heroic, and is of historical interest rather than poetic. It is the unadorned story of a warrior rather than the polished production of a poet. It contains passages of rugged strength such as one would expect from the pen of a warrior, but when he describes Nature he has occasional touches of delicate beauty.

**Taliesin** has been ranked with Aneurin by some writers, but he has no work that will compare in merit with the 'Gododin,' and more spurious poems bear his name than that of any other early bard except Myrddin. The *Book of Taliesin* is probably a collection of the poems of various bards of the early fourteenth century, who loved the protecting shelter of a great name. Some passages in the *Gorchanau*, however, appear to be modifications of



something much older, and some of the historical poems contain allusions to events prior to 600 A.D.—for example, those referring to Arthur Wledig, and to the earlier mythical Gwydion ap Dôn. Assuming the genuineness of some of these, Taliesin appears to have been a skilful composer, and there are some striking passages in which the imagery is both clear and bold. The ode on the battle of Argoed Llwyvain is said to be a genuine poem. It narrates the fight between Urien Rheged and Ida, King of Northumbria, who is called Fflamddwyn in the poem. Rheged is the modern Cumberland. Of the seventy-seven poems attributed to Taliesin, twelve are considered to belong to the sixth century, and eight are doubtful. Rhydderch Hael, who is a prominent figure in some of the poems, was King of the Strathclyde Cymry, and was converted to Christianity by Columba. He died in 601. In defence of Christianity he fought the battle of Arderydd in 577 against Gwenddoleu, an upholder of the old faith, and Aeddan, King of Scots. The pagans lost the day, and Gwenddoleu perished with ‘seven score chiefs.’

**Myrddin**, who was an adherent of Gwenddoleu, to whom he seems to have been deeply attached, was persecuted by Rhydderch and compelled to conceal himself in the forests which he calls ‘Coed Celyddon,’ where he is supposed to have addressed his reflections in the poems called the ‘Hoianau’ to a little pig who was the companion of his exile, an animal which amongst the old Cymry had a reputation for wisdom scarcely conceded to it now. Like Aneurin, Myrddin was a Strathclyde Briton, but he is more mythical than any of the early bards, and very few of the poems attributed to him have stood the test of modern criticism. Nennius does not mention him in his list of the bards who, he says, were ‘all famous at the same time in

British poetry,' although Aneurin, Taliesin, and Llywarch Hên appear in it. He is said to have fled from the persecutions of Rhydderch to Brittany, and this may account for his reputed reappearance in Breton poetry under the name Gwenchlan. The less authentic nature of the poems attributed to him is seen from the fact that his predictions had fallen into disrepute long before any of those purporting to be the work of Taliesin were doubted by the bards. Internal evidence disproves the possibility of the genuineness of most of the poems that bear his name, for they refer to persons and events of a much later period. The least open to doubt is that known as 'Kyvoesi Myrddin' (a dialogue between the bard and his sister), but portions of this are evidently late. Apart from their matter, their smoothness of diction as compared with the abruptness of the earlier bards' work, the presence of *conjunctions* which were generally conspicuous by their absence in genuine early poems, and the traces they bear of that fondness for alliteration, which afterwards developed into the *cynganedd*, preclude the possibility of their being Myrddin's work. This applies particularly to the poems known as the 'Hoianau' and the 'Afallenau,' that class of poem which generally contained predictions of the future glory of the Cymry, and which is now known to have been the work of later bards who, at the instigation of the princes, fired the imagination of their countrymen when their energies tended to flag under the strain of adverse circumstances, and spurred them to renewed efforts by effusions of this kind. They were the *stimuli* which the Cymry needed for a long contest.

**Llywarch Hên** is the reputed author of many poems in the *Red Book of Hergest*, some of which are undoubtedly old. They are written in the same metre as the Juvenus

fragment, a metre which has been clearly proved to have been no invention of the twelfth century, for it has been discovered upon monumental slabs belonging to the seventh century. It is difficult to resist the conclusion that the matter of some of the poems is as old as the sixth century, although the verbal forms are those of a much later date. This is no doubt due to the fact that every succeeding editor or scribe modernised the forms, not only into his own orthography, but that he also in many cases substituted his own vocabulary. Llywarch's poems are happy in their description of the manners of his age, and from a literary standpoint they are of higher merit than the works of Taliesin and the 'Gododin' of Aneurin. He is more subjective than Taliesin and has a great power of pathetic lamentation, many of his elegies containing fine sentiments. He is fond of beginning long strings of verses with the same word or phrase: for example, 'Ystafell Kynddylan,' and 'Eiry Mynydd.' The former is the most striking and best known of his poems. His strength lies in descriptive rather than heroic poetry. His historical poems contained in the *Red Book of Hergest* are full of expressions which imply that the bard witnessed many of the events he mentions: for instance, the poem which refers to the war between his own sons and Mwg Mawr Drefydd.

There are numerous other poems assigned to the Cynfeirdd, the bards responsible for them being mentioned by name in some cases, but not all. Meigant is responsible for a poem called 'Marwnad Cynddylan,' Elaeth for some verses called 'Cyngogion,' Tyssilio for those entitled 'Ymatreg Llywelyn a Gwrnerth,' Gwydion ab Dôn for 'Englynion Cad Goddau,' and other verses attributed to the Cynfeirdd are 'Englynion y Clywed,' by Catwg Ddoeth.



## CHAPTER II

### WELSH POETRY FROM 1080 TO 1200

ASSUMING that the bards who have just been noticed wrote some portion of the work that bears their name, how can the considerable gap between the sixth century and the revival of Welsh bardism in the twelfth century be explained? These intervening centuries would seem to have been almost entirely barren of literature.

Two considerations show, however, that bardism did not die out in that period. The laws of Howel Dda, which belong to the tenth century, make it quite clear that the bards played an honourable part in the life of the nation at that time, as the following extracts show :

The bard's land shall be free ; and he shall have a horse in attendance from the king.

He shall be next but one to the patron of the family.

The *heriot* of the bard is the same as that of the steward of the household, the judge of the court, the domestic chaplain, etc.

He shall have a harp from the king and a gold ring from the queen when his office is secured to him.

The laws of Howel also show that bardism was an organised profession with several distinctive grades.

It is also asserted that there was an *eisteddfod* in the ninth century presided over by Geraint, and the statement

is made with more certainty that Bleddyn ap Kynfyn held an *eisteddfod* in 1070 and 'issued some regulations for the better government of the order.'

The other consideration is that the language had been growing and ripening in this interval and becoming more elastic as a medium of thought. It is impossible to think that the abrupt, disconnected style of the early bards could have ripened into the smooth and clear versification of the twelfth century, had there not been in the interval considerable literary practice. A nation with no literature for five centuries could not have suddenly developed the comparatively artistic productions of the twelfth century.

There is some reason to believe that this period, although it produced little itself, kept alive the work of the old bards and to a considerable extent reconstructed it.

The battles of Deorham and Caerleon had had their effect in dispiriting the Cymry, and the dark days which followed were not favourable to the creative and imaginative faculties which were necessary to the production of the literature of a race of their temperament.

Strenuous times and critical periods in the life of nations generally witness much literary activity, but when the crisis is past with a result adverse in every respect, as it was in the case of the Cymry, a period of mental apathy and stagnation follows.

The bards remained, as certain fragments belonging to the seventh and ninth centuries testify, but they lived upon the reflected glory of the past. The unsettlement and confusion caused by the pouring in of the Strathclyde Britons and those from Cornwall and Devon into Wales, are no doubt potent factors which go far to explain this mysterious blank in Welsh literature for five centuries. That it was a period of decline is well seen from the first

feeble productions of Meilyr, who was the 'morning star' of the twelfth-century revival, the causes of which will now be set forth.

At the end of the eleventh century two events of considerable importance to Wales happened. One was the return of Rhys ap Tewdwr, the heir to the throne of South Wales, in 1077, and the other that of Gruffudd ap Cynan in 1080 to claim the throne of North Wales.

Cynan had fled to Ireland in 1041, leaving North Wales in the hands of a usurper, and after two unsuccessful efforts to recover his territory, had died in exile. Rhys ap Tewdwr had spent many years in Brittany, and upon his return in 1077, to claim his own, he was 'unanimously elected by the people.' The combined armies of Gruffudd ap Cynan and Rhys ap Tewdwr were successful at Carno in 1080, and Trahaearn the usurper was killed on the field. Hence the two princes who had been in exile were established on the thrones of North and South Wales respectively. The outburst of literary activity which now took place centred around them. Gruffudd ap Cynan had been born in Ireland, and had lived there sufficiently long to imbibe the culture of that country, which at the time was an important centre of learning, as it had been for many centuries previous. He must have been familiar with Irish poetry and Irish music, and having literary tastes himself, he would naturally communicate them to his court, and soon have around him a band of men animated with a spirit for literature kindred to his own. Rhys ap Tewdwr had brought with him much store of those traditions in which Brittany was so rich, having received many of them, it is believed, from the Cymric exiles who, under stress of the evil times they experienced in the sixth century, had found in that land a congenial home even as



Rhys himself had later. These traditions form the basis of many of the beautiful romances now found in the *Red Book of Hergest*. Hence it was that this revival of literature, as might have been expected, took a poetical turn in North Wales, and led to the production of some vigorous prose in South Wales. Leaving the latter to a later chapter, for it demands separate treatment, the revival of poetry will be noticed in the rest of this chapter.

The first to strike the strings of his lyre and to break the silence of many centuries was **Meilyr**, who has been already mentioned. Striking at first with rather an unsteady, unpractised hand, he gathered strength and confidence as he proceeded. It will be seen in the poem 'I Drahaearn a Meilyr,' that the slumbering embers of poetic fire, when first stirred, gave but an intermittent flame. Trahaearn was the usurper who fell at Carno, and the first product of Meilyr's muse laments the fall of his master, for he was his *bardd teulu*. There is no real poetic merit in the poem; its interest is rather historical. It is written in a metre known as the *Ban Kyrch*, in which the last word of a line rhymes with a word in or near the middle of the succeeding line; *e.g.*

Cad a vydd ym mynydd Carn  
A Trahaearn a ladder.<sup>1</sup>

This will be found to have been a favourite metre with the bards of this period.

Strangely enough, Meilyr also wrote an elegy to the new ruler, Gruffudd ap Cynan, on his death in 1137. It is a poem of some length, and a great improvement on the one above mentioned. Another ode of his, entitled *Marwysgafn Feilyr Brydydd*, written by the bard on his deathbed as the

<sup>1</sup> These quotations are not given in the early orthography.

title implies, shows an immeasurable advance in poetic merit and power of thought, and gives some idea of the vigorous growth of the literary revival during the fifty years of Gruffudd ap Cynan's reign.

**Gwalchmai** was Meilyr's son, and achieved greater excellence as a poet than his father. There are twelve of his poems in the *Myvyrian Archaiology*, five of which are composed to Owen Gwynedd, prince of North Wales, one to each of Owen's sons, Rodri and Dafydd, two to Madoc ap Meredydd, one to his own wife, and two personal poems entitled *Breuddwyd Gwalchmai* and *Gorhoffedd Gwalchmai*. The latter is a fine poem displaying an ardent love of Nature and a cultivated taste in appreciating its beauties.

Poems of this kind are in striking and pleasing contrast with the martial poems and the eulogies and elegies so much in vogue at that and subsequent periods, and a rapid transition from the clash and din of war to the 'soothing lays of the wood, the melodious talk of birds, the murmuring brooks, the nightingale brimful of song, and the sea-birds playing in their beds of foam' (as a great Welsh writer has summarised the *Gorhoffedd*), which is a feature in many of Gwalchmai's odes, comes as a great relief, and imparts a freshness to this bard's work, all too rare in early Welsh poetry. Gwalchmai's best-known poem is his ode on the battle of Tal y Moelfre, which has been described by Stephens as a 'continued fiery torrent of poetic flame.' It is supposed to refer to the defeat of Henry II.'s fleet in its attempt to land at Abermenai in 1157. Gray's poem 'The Triumphs of Owen' is a translation of this ode. Its finest poetic idea is contained in the two lines—

A Menai heb drai o drallanw gwaedryar  
A lliw gwyar gwŷr yn heli ;

which Gray translates—

Checked by the torrent tide of blood,  
Backward Menai rolls his flood.

**Owain Kyveiliog**, the next poet of mark in this period, was not less successful in war than in song. He was the son of Gruffudd ap Meredydd, prince of Powys, and is first mentioned in 1162, when he led an army into the territories of Howel ab Ieuav between the Wye and the Severn, and inflicted upon him a crushing defeat. In 1165 he led the men of Powys in the combined and successful resistance which the Welsh princes offered in that year to Henry II. It is to some incident in this campaign that Owain Kyveiliog's famous poem '*Corn Hirlas*' refers, and it is this rather than his military achievements, successful as they were, that will enshrine him in the minds of his countrymen. The *Corn Hirlas* was the long, blue, silver-rimmed drinking cup which was passed round the table on the occasion of a feast. The poet's conception is that a battle had taken place in the morning, followed by a banquet in the evening, at which the prince presided and recited the merits of each warrior as the cup was passed to him. He commands the cup-bearer to fill up the horn, and enumerates their feats on that and other fields. Having sung the praises of Tudur and Moreiddig, two chiefs of renown, the cup is passed to them and the prince proceeds to greet them, but alas! their place knows them no more, and it is realised with a bitter pang that they have fallen in the morning's conflict. The sudden transition from hilarity and exultation to the most intense grief is the feature of the poem.

In another poem, entitled '*I Gylchau Kymru*,' one of the national customs of the period is described. At stated



times, the prince made a circuit through Powys to receive his rents, preceded by a herald who announced him with the customary pomp. The poem in a series of *englynion* describes such a circuit, the customs that obtained, and the various places visited.

**Howel ab Owain Gwynedd** is the second prince of this period who not only lent the influence of his patronage to literature, but was himself an active contributor. He was the natural son of Owain Gwynedd, King of North Wales, and distinguished himself both in the arts of peace and war. He possessed great mechanical skill in the warfare of his age, and was an adept at besieging castles. The poet Cynddelw, who refers to him as 'gwawr trin' (the hero of battle), sings his praises as a successful besieger on two occasions—the taking of Carmarthen Castle from the Normans in 1144, and Kynvael Castle from his uncle Cadwaladr a few years later. Gwalchmai's ode to the battle of Tal y Moelfre, 1157, implies that Howel was also present there:

A draig Môn mor ddrud i *eisyllydd* yn aer  
(Mona's dragon whose son was so valiant in battle)—

the *draig* referring to Owain Gwynedd, and *eisyllydd* to Howel. The latter, too, in a short but vivid ode gives a description of the same battle with its gore and fire, its blood-stained homesteads, burning churches, and perishing ships.

On the death of his father in 1169, Howel succeeded him, and for two years reigned in peace, but on his departure to Ireland in 1171 to take possession of his mother's property, his younger half-brother David aspired to the throne and proclaimed himself King of North Wales. Howel returned immediately, but was slain in his effort to regain his patrimony. His death was the occasion of Periv ap



Kedifor's fine and intelligible elegy, which is full of genuine feeling, for between him and the dead prince had existed a deep attachment, inasmuch as they had been nurtured together.

Howel's poems are much more readable than those of previous bards, and he avoids the pedantries of so many of his contemporaries. His short poems, and they predominate, are particularly bright and tuneful, and richly deserve the many praises that have been bestowed upon them. Stephens says that they were 'the sweetest productions of the age.' His more lengthy poem 'Gwladgarwch Howel' is full of admiration for his country, and glows with genuine feeling. It has been suggested that he wrote it upon his return from Ireland to defend his crown against his half-brother. Howel felt the hopelessness of his cause from the first, and seemed to write under the shadow of coming disaster. He dwells longingly upon the natural beauties of his country, and extols the passion of love—a theme on which he is easily the first poet of his age.

**Einion**, the son of Gwalchmai, who has been already noticed, was a bard of some taste, and five of his poems have been preserved. His elegy upon Nest, who was probably the daughter of Howel ab Owain Gwynedd, is the best known.

## CHAPTER III

### THE BARDS OF LLEWELYN AB IORWERTH'S REIGN

THE first bard to be noticed in this period is **Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr**, who was the most prolific writer of his age, judging from the number of his poems which have escaped the ravages of time. No less than forty-nine of them appear in the *Myvyrian Archaiology*, and a study of them shows Cynddelw to have been a man of much influence and varied interests, and a poet of ready but cumbersome muse. He was in touch with most of the leading men of his day, as will be seen from his compositions to Owain Gwynedd, Owain Kyveiliog, the Lord Rhys of South Wales, Llewelyn ab Iorwerth, Gwenwynwyn, and Tyssilio. The intricacy and difficulty of his language make his compositions very unreadable. His elegy upon Owain Gwynedd shows that his muse was best adapted to heavy subjects. He has not the charm of some of the bards who preceded him, and lacks the power of calling up vivid images, although they be the stereotyped images popular with the bards of his day. He has a greater wealth of vocabulary than any of his contemporaries, but often wields it so as to hide his meaning in a cloud of words. But in spite of the lack of poetic merit from which much of his work suffers, it must be admitted that he was a skilled versifier.

His poems betray an inveterate hatred of the monks; but he was no exception to the bards in this respect, although few of them give such strong expression to it. There existed between them a natural antipathy, because their interests clashed in more ways than one.

Cynddelw's 'Awdl i Dduw' is interesting, because it discloses the ideas of theology prevalent amongst the bards of his age. They displayed a spirit of toleration much in advance of their time, and an intellectual keenness which does them much credit.

The manners of the people and the state of the country are well described in his verses to Rhys ap Gruffudd, which are more readable than many of his poems. His ode addressed to Owain Kyveiliog has been regarded as a companion sketch to 'Corn Hirias,' and although it lacks the vividness and pathos of that striking poem, it yet possesses some merit, and sometimes rises to a pitch of animated description.

It has been suggested that the verses known as the Avallenau, spuriously attributed to Myrddin, are either the work of this bard or that of Gwalchmai. A careful comparison of them with the work of each inclines one to believe that they have more in common, especially in their smoothness and pliancy of diction, with the odes of Gwalchmai than with the more pedantic effusions of Cynddelw.

**Llywarch ap Llewelyn**, who shall next be noticed, was a bard of considerable talent, and his unfettered imagination, together with his power of sympathy and lucidity of expression, gave him a high place amongst the bards of the thirteenth century. He is sometimes known as Prydydd y Moch, and Stephens suggests that this is probably due to the knowledge possessed at the time, that he

was the author of the verses known as the 'Hoianau,' and sometimes called 'Ceiniadon Moch.' This seems very likely, for the matter of many of the verses clearly refers to events which happened in the thirteenth century. The light they throw upon the political movements of the time, their predictions of the greatness of Llewelyn ab Iorwerth, their mention of Meredydd and Rhys Gryg, sons of the Lord Rhys of South Wales, their reference to the quarrels of the sons of Owain Gwynedd, and their resemblance to much of Llywarch ap Llewelyn's other work, form a weight of testimony in favour of this theory not easily shaken.

Llywarch was Llewelyn ab Iorwerth's *bardd teulu*, and most of his poems are composed in honour of the royal house of Gwynedd. His Address to Llewelyn is one of his finest efforts, and is full of the intensity of feeling and vividness of description, couched at the same time in smooth, flowing language, which characterise most of his work. In design it is typical of many poems of that age. It begins with an invocation to the Deity, full of suppressed anxiety to do justice to the task in hand, and passes to the hero's pedigree and a glowing description of the battle of Porthaethwy. Then, after recounting Llewelyn's previous conflicts, it ends with a tribute to the prince's unbounded generosity to the bards, especially to the writer himself. The verse below, quoted from this poem, will serve as an example of Llywarch ap Llewelyn's power of description :

Ef yn llyw cyn llid gyfysgar,  
Ysglyfion ysglyfiynt llwrw bar,  
Oedd rynn rudd ebyr or gwyr gwar,  
Oedd ran feirw fwyaf o'r drydar,  
Oedd amlw tonnau, twnn amhar i naid,



Neud oeddynt dilafar,  
 Ton heli ehelaeth i bar,  
 Ton arall gwall, goch gwyar,  
 Porthaethwy pan aetham ni ar feirch mordwy,  
 Uch mowrdwrf tonniar,  
 Oedd ongyr, oedd engir i bar,  
 Oedd angudd godrudd gwaedryar,  
 Oedd enghyrth yn hynt, oedd angar,  
 Oedd ing, oedd angau anghymar,  
 Oedd ammau ir byd bod abar o honam,  
 O henaint lleithiar.

In one of his poems, 'Awdl yr Haearn Twymn,' he mentions the *ordeal* for testing innocence or guilt by grasping a red-hot iron. If this was used in Wales in his day, as the poem implies, it had survived its existence in England for a considerable period. The bard implies that he had resorted to it to clear himself from the imputation of the murder of Madoc, son of Owain Gwynedd, who, it seems, was last seen in his company before his mysterious disappearance. Although he scarcely believes in the virtue of the test, he begs the iron to exonerate him:

Da haearn diheura pan llas  
 Lleith Madawc nad om llaw y cawas  
 Noc ae ceiff cain ae glas  
 Rann o nef ae naw teyrnas  
 A minheu mynnaf gyweithas  
 Bodd Duw ym a dianc oe gas.

**Einion ap Gwgan** has only one poem preserved in the *Myvyrian Archaiology*, but it is of such excellence that it commands attention. It is an address to Llewelyn ab Iorwerth whom he describes as—

*Llawenydd y dydd, deddyf ai mawl,  
Lllewychedig llafn yn llaw reddfawl.*

*Llawenydd lluoedd, llew yn bryder,  
Llywiauwydr ymmerawdr môr a lleufer.*

He contrasts the prince as a warrior upon whom he cannot bestow too laudatory terms, 'the joy of armies,' 'a lion in danger,' the 'eagle of battle, conspicuous above the rest,' with the same man upon his own hearth, genial and witty, refined and thoughtful, tender and generous :

*Dyn yw Llewelyn llywiauwr tyner,  
Doeth, coeth, cywrenin, gwin a gwener,  
A'r gwr ai rhoddes in ran or pader  
Ai rhoddo ef gwenfro gwynfryn uch ser.*

**Dafydd Benfras** is the next bard of any importance in this period. Twelve of his poems are extant, and most of them are addressed to Llewelyn ab Iorwerth. He is not quite on so high a level as Llywarch ab Llewelyn, but his work has less apparent wastage of words than that of many of his contemporaries, more continuity of thought, and less straining after effect. Although he seldom reaches any great excellence, he rarely indulges in commonplaces, and in his moral verses he dispenses with much of the jargon of his order. His style is dignified, and he has an unerring gift of choosing words appropriate to his theme. His finest poem is one composed in honour of his prince and patron, Llewelyn ab Iorwerth, and it compares favourably with that of Llywarch. He begins with a similar invocation, and implores the aid of the muse of Myrddin and Aneurin. After a fine description of Llewelyn's prowess, and unstinted praise of his warriors, couched in well chosen terms, he closes the poem with a fervent benediction.

To Dafydd Benvras and Llywarch ap Llewelyn belongs the credit of attempting to free bardism from the too restrictive metres and obscure diction of the more pedantic of the fraternity. With this object they began to use the loose *hupynt* metre, which, owing to its elasticity, afterwards became so popular, especially with the versified tale writers. The following is a fair example of Dafydd Benvras' use of this metre. It is taken from a poem addressed to the last prince of Wales, and is of some historical value, because it relates his military exploits, in the order of their sequence :

Pummed Forganwg  
Parhaus gilwg ;  
Er a wnel o ddrwg  
Nis diwedda.

Chweched i dramwy,  
Chwechad yn Adwy,  
Yn Aber Tawy,  
Teg esgorva.

Seithved Gedweli,  
Seithgad iw llosgi,  
O Ystrad Tywi,  
Tew i haerva.

Wythved hynt greulawn,  
I Garnewillawn,  
O Geredigiawn,  
Y dug yma.

In the hands of the abler bard, Llywarch ap Llewelyn, the following is an example of its more effective use. He is addressing Llewelyn ab Iorwerth :

Cyfarchaf im Rhen,  
Cyvarchvawr Awen,  
Cyvreu Cyrridwen,  
Rwyv Barddoni.

Yn dull Taliesin,  
 Yn dillwng Elphin,  
 Yn dyllest Barddrin,  
 Beirdd vanieri.

Several of the mythological poems are written in this metre, and it is quite possible that the two bards just mentioned were responsible for a few of them. The anachronisms they contain make it impossible to assign to them an earlier origin. They breathe the same spirit as the Mabinogion and the Romances, and the characters are sometimes identical; also the same clear and smooth language is employed, and the same topics treated. By far the most interesting of these poems is the Mabonigi of Taliesin, from which the lines below are quoted in order to show how well adapted was the *hupynt* metre for these descriptive stories in verse :

Priv vardd cyssevin  
 Wyv vi i Elfin,  
 A'm gwlad gynnevin  
 Yw bro ser hevin ;  
 Ioannes ddewin  
 Ym gelwis Merddin,  
 Bellach pob brenin  
 Ym geilw Taliesin.  
 Bum gyda vy Ner  
 Yn ngoruchelder,  
 Ar gwymyp Lucifer  
 I ufern ddyvnder ;  
 Bum yn dwyn baner  
 Rhag Alexander ;  
 Mi wn enwau ser  
 Gogledd ac awster,  
 Bum yn nghaer Gwdion  
 Gan orsedd Deon ;



Bum mi yn Nghanon  
Pan las Absalon.

The language here, as well as the metre, shows that the poem cannot be earlier than the end of the thirteenth century. The traditions contained in this and similar poems were old, but the very form in which they have been cast places this period as the very extreme limit of their literary antiquity.

**Elidir Sais** has eleven poems bearing his name in the *Myvyrian*, and two of them throw some light upon his relations with Llewelyn ab Iorwerth. He seems to have angered the prince and come under his suspicion owing to his frequent intercourse with the English, and this, perhaps, accounts for the appellation 'Sais.' It was certainly not owing to any inferiority in the language of his poems. The easy flow of his verse makes it extremely unlikely that he was an Englishman who had learned Welsh. Whatever the cause of the prince's anger, he pleads his innocence warmly, and begs him not to expatriate him:

Nam gad i wybraw eb obryn—dy far  
Oth fawr eang derfyn  
Glew llawr cenedl fawr Ferefyn  
Glyw Lliwellydd Llywelyn.

He throws himself upon Llewelyn's mercy and forswears England:

Bydd wrth wann gyfran gywrenin  
Bydd iawn llary wrth gerddeu iownllin  
Bydd wrddrud aer ddylud ddilin  
Dilein Lloegr a llwgr oi gwerin.

Most of his poems are on religious subjects and are above the average in merit. They form part of that mass of religious poetry, produced in the Middle Ages, which

discloses the prevailing attitude of the bardic mind towards the theology of their day. The bards seem to have had broad and enlightened views on many questions, and to have understood and appreciated the principles of Christianity, although they were often ill-disposed towards its accredited exponents. Elidir wrote :

Ystyr di enwir herwydd a treithir  
 Gan Dduw ni cheffir dim cynirha  
 Eithyr gwirionedd a gwar tangnefedd  
 A gwir drugaredd val y gwedda  
 Edrych dy vuchedd kyn mynd ith fedd  
 O gwnaethost gamwedd na ryvedda  
 Bod yn dir talu ger bron Iesu.

The picture he draws of the Crucified One is full of touching appeal to the emotions :

Dangos ffrowylleu ae holl archol-leu,  
 Ae gethreu, ae greu, ae groc a wna  
 Hynn a wnaethum i, beth a wnaethost di ?  
 Medd Crist Celi rhi rheid oedd yna  
 Bod gleindyd purawd yn erbyn Duwdawd,  
 Rhag trallawd pechawd devawd diva.

The religious sentiment which drew so many men into the Crusades is taken note of by Elidir Sais, who shows how strong an influence it had on the public mind.

**Phylip Brydydd** was the family bard of Rhys Gryg, Lord of South Wales, and in one of his poems entitled 'Kynghorion Dadolwch a gant Phylip Brydydd i Rys Gryg gwedi sorri wrthaw am brydu i neb arall namyn iddaw ef,' he throws an interesting light on the relations existing between himself and his patron. The latter strongly objected to his going on circuit, after the bardic custom of the time, and singing the praises of others, but Phylip defends himself with much moderation and tact.

Sandwiched amongst the encomiums he bestows upon his patron is a dignified passage in which he declares he cannot eat Rhys' bread so long as his anger and dislike continue :

Ys yng yn ystwnng ystic vara Rhys.

He appeals to their old friendship to remove the misunderstanding :

Bardd vum itt trimud tremynt  
A chedymddeith kanweith kynt.

In another poem he champions the cause of the chief bards against the poetasters, whom he strongly opposed as bringing discredit upon the bardic profession. He uses the lash unsparingly, employing such stinging epithets as 'geufardd anghyfrwys.' This is the poem which mentions the blow given by the bard Golyddan to Brân the Blessed, a lack of respect which Phylip does not attempt to defend.

O gwnaeth Golyddan gyflafan diryeid  
Bid ar i eneid yr enwiredd.

He expresses an exalted idea of his calling, and asserts that in spite of the discord introduced by the poetasters, real poetry, the divine gift, cannot suffer. It is God-given, and beyond man's power to injure.

Divreiniaw dawn Duw nyd dyn ae medd.

**Einion Wann** was regarded by his contemporaries as a bard of great excellence. Gruffudd ab Gwrgeneu refers to him as 'Einion dawn dinam,' and what has been preserved of his work undoubtedly compares favourably with anything produced in his age. His diction is fairly intelligible to a modern reader, and he has the power of presenting striking images in remarkably few words. His

elegy to Madoc ab Gruffudd Maelor contains some lines of rugged strength and powerful sympathy, and is certainly one of the best *marwnadau* composed in the thirteenth century. The following *englynion* are taken from it :

Neud rhaid am Fadawg trengi—ciwdodoedd  
 Gwalch cadoedd cadrfalch ri  
 Neud trai calon donn dug fi  
 Ac neud trwydoll o'i golli.

O golli Madawg edgyllaeth—cofion  
 Gwyw calon gan hiraeth  
 Gwawr llawr llwyddedig bennaeth  
 Gwae i fro ai frodyr maeth.

Maeth Madawg mynawg mynudirwydd—wrthlyw  
 Ac wrth lew ymorchwydd  
 Arf tarf terfyn ehangrwydd  
 Aerwr oreu pei canmlwydd.

Canmlwydd ydd oedd raid ruddelwch—i fod  
 I fad gynnal heddwch  
 Gwalch brynn brenin ynialwch  
 Gwael nad byw byd neud am drwch.

It would be difficult to employ more realistic phrases descriptive of the energy, strength, and impetuosity of his dead patron than some of those used by Einion Wann, *e.g.* 'blaidd blaengar,' 'teyrn arfrudd câd,' 'tymestl câd.' He takes a touching farewell of Madoc and leaves him in his 'cynnoer wely diddestl,' as he so aptly expresses the coldness and forgetfulness of the grave.



## CHAPTER IV

### MEDIEVAL WELSH PROSE

**Geoffrey of Monmouth**, or, as he is better known in Welsh literature, Gruffudd ab Arthur, was educated by his uncle Uchtryd, Bishop of Llandaf, who ordained him and made him Archdeacon of Monmouth. He was a distinguished man of letters, his chief works being a Latin translation of the prophecies of Myrddin, and his *Historia Britonum*, a chronicle which purports to give the history of Britain from the earliest times to the abdication of Cadwaladr in the middle of the seventh century. It is upon the latter work that his fame mainly rests, for it became a great treasure-house from which medieval poets and romancers so often chose their themes. He dedicated it to Robert, Earl of Gloucester, to whom he was chaplain, and it was written not later than 1147, for Robert died in that year. It is sometimes asserted that Geoffrey became Bishop of St. Asaph in 1152, but this is evidently a mistake, for the chronicler Caradoc states that he was made Bishop of Llandaf in that year, but died before he entered upon his duties.

Whether Geoffrey's *Chronicle* is a translation or an original work is a vexed question. He himself says that he translated a book which Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford, had brought from Brittany. It was at least natural that a

Welshman should be asked to translate Breton stories, and if the assertion were untrue, it is difficult to believe that Walter would not have repudiated it, for he outlived Geoffrey. Whether he translated, collected, or invented these stories, literature owes him a debt of gratitude. It is probable that some such book as he mentions came into his hands, and that he made use of materials from many other sources from which such a history could be compiled, and which he says 'were preserved in writing by a great many people.' Many of the legends he relates were drawn from Nennius and Gildas and enlarged upon. The old Celtic legends with which his Bruts are crowded could not deceive any one into a belief in their accuracy as facts. If they had a purpose at all, it would seem to have been the allaying of race animosities by pointing out the common origin of the inhabitants of Britain. Their fabulous character was, of course, recognised in his own day, for Gerald the Welshman relates the delicious story that one from whom evil spirits had been cast out experienced their prompt return as soon as a copy of Geoffrey's *Historia* was placed near him. Sometimes Geoffrey inserts his own reflections, and with candid criticism points out a defect in the character of his countrymen, where, for instance, he rebukes the British for lack of sustained effort and continued perseverance; they would rush eagerly to the attack but lacked tenacity in its conduct.

Wace's *Brut d'Angleterre* is a translation of Geoffrey's *Historia*, and Layamon in his *Brut* is considerably indebted to him. To him, also, Shakspeare was indebted for the foundation of some of his plots. Very few tales of chivalry for the next four hundred years failed to borrow something from Geoffrey of Monmouth.

**Caradoc of Llancarvan**, who is mentioned by

Geoffrey as his contemporary, begins his *Chronicle* where the latter ends, viz. at the abdication of Cadwaladr. It is possible that much of it was not Caradoc's work, but was continued by various writers from time to time. The work is known as *Brut y Tywysogion*, and is found with that of Geoffrey and Walter de Mapes in the second volume of the *Myvyrian Archaiology*.

**The Liber Landavensis**, or *Book of Teilo*, is a chronicle, written in Welsh and Latin, of the lives of the Bishops of Llandaf, and covers a period of five hundred years, ending in the middle of the twelfth century. Its contents are mostly monkish legends, but many of its facts throw considerable light upon the manners of the times, in which slavish superstition and clerical despotism play a prominent part.

**Edeyrn Dafod Aur** was a celebrated grammarian of the thirteenth century, who, at the instigation of Llewelyn ab Gruffudd (1254-1282), compiled an able book on British prosody.

**Meddygon Myddfai** is an interesting work of the early part of the thirteenth century, containing a compendium of the medical recipes and remedies of Rhiwallon of Myddvai and his sons, who were physicians to Rhys Gryg, lord of Dynevor.

**Brut Tyssilio** is supposed to have been the work of Walter de Mapes, Archdeacon of Oxford, who translated it from Welsh into Latin, and then back into Welsh. It is the opinion of some writers that what Walter translated the second time was not the original copy but an improved Latin version of that copy by Geoffrey of Monmouth. *Brut Tyssilio* and *Brut Gruffudd ab Arthur* agree word for word in many parts. The fiction of the Trojan origin of the kings of Britain is common to both.



**Brut y Saeson** is not a chronicle recounting the history of the Saxons, as its name would perhaps imply, but one showing the connection of Wales with England, and reviewing the transactions of Britain generally.

**The Laws of Howel Dda**, who was king of South Wales at the beginning of the tenth century, are of the greatest historical interest. Howel succeeded his father Cadell at a time of great disorder, to diminish which he assembled a great council of nobles, bishops, and clergy at Ty Gwyn ar Daf, and from amongst them he selected a small committee who drew up these laws. They throw great light on the life of the people and the conduct of the court. The exact date of their compilation is uncertain, but 948 is generally given as the year of Howel's death. They afterwards developed into, at least, two different codes: the Venedotian code operating in Gwynedd and Powys, was a modification of that of South Wales and Gwent, to meet the different conditions that existed there. The laws of the court are given as distinct from the laws of the country.

**The Triads.**—Cæsar affirmed that the Druids cultivated the art of memory, and in an age when writing was seldom resorted to, and at that was the accomplishment of a very few, it is easy to understand that facts put into the terse form of the *triad* would be readily remembered, not indeed that there are any triads which hark back to Druid times, but it is not unreasonable to believe that the habit of epitomising facts in a form that would thus appeal to the memory was cultivated at a very early period. There is no collection of triads earlier than the twelfth century in their present form, and the majority, it is believed, are fifteenth-century productions. They cover a wide range of subjects—history, bardism, theology, ethics, and jurispru-



dence. Many of the historical triads are plainly fabulous, and others refer to events in support of which no confirmatory evidence can be produced. It is said that the bards at their public congresses recited these triads.

**The Mabinogion.**—The national character of Wales is better reflected in the prose literature of the Middle Ages than in the work of the bards, whose effusions were too severe and artificial to enjoy popular favour amongst a people so free, merry, and witty, as Gerald the Welshman states his countrymen were.

When the revival of literature came in the twelfth century, it was natural that the traditions which they had clung to for many centuries, the fables and tales of the winter fireside, which had naturally received accretions from every succeeding age, and had been moulded by each to suit its own tastes, should be collected and arranged. It was suggested that many of the romantic tales recited by Geoffrey of Monmouth were doubtless drawn from these traditions. In them, too, we have the origin of the Mabinogion. The term has been applied loosely to all the tales, but, strictly speaking, it should be confined to four—the stories of Pwyll, Branwen, Math, and Manawyddan. Three of the rest may be termed *Breuddwydion*, viz. Macsen Wledig, Rhonabwy, and Lludd and Llevelis, and all the remainder may be taken as forming one group—the *Romances*.

These tales differ greatly in character. Some of them deal with persons and events of a very remote antiquity, and others belong to the period of chivalry. The very earliest tales are marked by the absence of Arthur, who afterwards became the central hero of romance, and the antiquity of the rest can be gauged to some extent by their treatment of that character.

On this basis they can be further divided into three classes:

(1) The Mabinogi of Pwyll, Branwen, Manawyddan, and Math, Breuddwyd Maccsen Wledig, and Lludd and Llevelis.

These refer to a period before Arthur had become a popular hero. He is not mentioned in them at all, nor do they contain any trace of knight-errantry, which is a feature peculiar to the later tales and the period of chivalry. The dominant influence in them is the supernatural; magic and enchantment take the place of personal prowess.

(2) Breuddwyd Rhonabwy and the story of Kulhwch and Olwen.

These are the oldest of the Arthurian group, but in them Arthur had not developed into the magnificent hero of later tales. He is a prince of some distinction, but not yet a mighty emperor. His court is at Gelliwig in Cornwall, the dazzling splendour of Caerlleon has not yet been reached. In both tales he hunts the mythological animal called the Twrch Trwyth *with* his knights. It is a collective task, not a display of individual prowess.

The story of Kulhwch and Olwen is, in point of language and the customs mentioned, older than any in the *Red Book of Hergest*, and the presence of Arthur in it at all may have been due to a subsequent writer who made a concession to the spirit of the times after he had become a popular hero, but both here and in Breuddwyd Rhonabwy he is distinctly a Kymric hero with his court fixed at Gelliwig in Cornwall.

(3) Owain and Luned, Geraint and Enid, and Peredur belong to a later period, when the Arthurian romance had developed considerably. Arthur himself is no longer a petty chieftain but a powerful emperor holding sway over

the whole civilised world. His court is fixed at Caerlleon, and is of unrivalled splendour. The individual exploits of himself and his knights are now all-prominent. The knight-errantry of the age of chivalry is fully developed. These stories were no doubt written after Geoffrey of Monmouth had so popularised Arthur that he was readily and even eagerly received as the national hero, and the writers of these romances simply supplied the popular demand. The bards were more tardy in this respect, and clung to Cadwaladr as the national hero for some time subsequently. They probably failed to reconcile themselves to those elements in the character of Arthur which were not strictly Kymric. This lends countenance to the theory that it was the exiles who returned with Rhys ap Tewdwr in 1077 who brought with them the Arthurian stories, and also to Geoffrey's statement that he translated some of his work from Breton sources. The proximity of Brittany to Normandy probably explains the spirit of knight-errantry which had crept into the stories. It is well known that the Normans exercised an influence upon our literature, improving and extending the tales they derived from Celtic sources. The spirit of personal adventure was strong in the Norman character, so the un-Celtic element of knight-errantry in these tales can with some reason be ascribed to the Normans. They adopted the Celtic framework, but clothed it with their own strong imitative and illustrative faculties.

So strong was the popular taste for stories of this kind, that even the bards, exclusive and conservative as they were, yielded at length to expediency, and Bleddyn Fardd in the thirteenth century refers to Arthur in eulogistic terms, and to Caerlleon as the best of places.

In their present form the Mabinogion are not older than



the twelfth century, but they represent traditions that were in circulation before. For the term *Mabinogion* the bards were probably responsible. It was applied to the stories slightly, at first, as lighter literary productions scarcely worthy of comparison with their more weighty themes and severer form and diction. They were *tales for the young*, and nothing more.

The Mabinogi of Taliesin is later than the rest, and is reputed to have been the work of Thomas ab Einion Offeiriad who lived in the thirteenth century. The religious colouring of the later stories, the 'San Greal,' 'Ystori i draethu mal ydd aeth Mair i'r nef,' and many others of the same kind, is due to the monks, who quickly saw the advantage of using them to quicken religious sentiment. In the tales of the Greal, the monastic influence is supreme, and the Mabinogi of Taliesin bears the same imprint. Geoffrey and Layamon both used the romances in this way, with the result that they gained both in tone and dignity. They contain many passages of surpassing beauty, and without the Mabinogion, not only Welsh literature, but the literature of Europe would be decidedly the poorer.



## CHAPTER V

### THE BARDS OF LLEWELYN AB GRUFFUDD'S REIGN

THE bards of the earlier part of the reign have left little of any merit, but towards its close many compositions which rank high in Welsh literature both in wealth of ideas and poetic fervour were produced.

**Llygad Gwr** in 1270 wrote an ode to Llewelyn ab Gruffudd in five parts, which contains much that will interest the historian of this period. It cannot be said that the ideas in this poem are well connected, and perhaps the flattery showered upon the prince is too excessive, but the list of place-names, and persons, and the conflicts mentioned are useful material for the historian. He speaks of Llewelyn's dominions as extending to the Teifi, and calls the prince 'llyw pedeiriaith' (a ruler who spoke four languages). If this is true, it shows that the Welsh princes of that period were more cultured than might have been expected in times so warlike and unsettled. But it is known that Llewelyn was not only a patron of literature, but that he indulged in writing verses himself, as many of his predecessors had done.

The images which fascinated Llygad Gwr were decidedly gory, and remind one of a state of mind into which, it is said, savage tribes are sometimes worked up, and which has been described as 'seeing red.' He speaks of the

prince's blood-red spear, his army bathed in red, and of the blood flowing from the soles of the feet of a flying foe and staining the field of battle. The bard shows in this poem that he had imbibed the philosophy peculiar to his order; for instance, he says that Llewelyn was the best prince ever made out of the *four elements*:

Ef difeiaf naf rhy wnaeth Dofydd  
Yn y byd o bedwar defnydd.

**Einion ab Madoc** composed a poem to Gruffudd, Llewelyn's father. It is brimful of the spirit of the times, and sounds a note of defiance to both the English and the Normans, who were scouring the country. He mentions a fierce conflict at Trallwng Elfael, a place on the borders of Radnorshire, and airs the opposition of his countrymen to taxes and oaths of submission:

Nid gnawd oe ardal na thal na thwng.

**Y Prydydd Bychan**, probably so called on account of the shortness of his poems, has twenty compositions addressed mostly to the princes of South Wales, but his longest poem is to Owain Goch, son of Gruffudd ab Llewelyn. Both Owain and his father had been imprisoned for many years by David, son of Llewelyn ab Iorwerth. The Bishop of Bangor, who had been partly instrumental in getting them imprisoned, sought afterwards, but in vain, for their release. The King of England interfered, and took both Owain and Gruffudd with him to London, being assured by David that they were dangerous to the peace of the country. They were kept in honourable confinement in the Tower, hence the reference to Owain in this poem as 'gwawr Llundain' (the hero of London). Owain escaped into North Wales, and sup-

ported by a strong party he got possession of the counties of Anglesey and Carnarvon, holding his court at Aberffraw :

Dreic llys Ffraw drwc ar lles Ffranc.

Embarking upon a more ambitious scheme, he was opposed by Llewelyn ab Gruffudd and taken prisoner at the battle of Bryn Derwyn, and was afterwards kept in confinement for twenty-three years at the castle of Dolbadarn, Llanberis. Howel Voel wrote him two poems during his incarceration. On his release in 1277, Llewelyn, who had in the interval ruled North Wales alone, generously gave him the Cantref of Llein. The date of Owain's death is unknown, but Bleddyn Vardd, who shall be noticed later, wrote an elegy to his memory.

Prydydd Bychan used a metre called *Proest Cyfnewidiog* which has a different vowel in the last syllable of each line, thus: -ed, -yd, -ud, -ad. This came into frequent use later on. Here is an example of a sixteenth-century bard's use of it :

Amryw enwog mawr winwydd  
A mawr enw am a ranodd  
A mawr iawn ymro Wynedd  
Am roi i weiniaid Meirionydd.

WM. LLŶN.

**Howel Voel**, or Howel the Bald, was partly of Irish extraction, and had not, according to the custom of that age, established his claim to the rights of a fully naturalised Welshman. The laws of naturalisation were then very exclusive, and only recognised the ninth in descent from a foreigner. But Howel, whose grandfather Pwyll was an Irishman, wrote the language with as much freedom and ease as any of his contemporary bards. He affects their

fondness for beginning long strings of lines with the same word, and he does this in his ode to the imprisoned Owain, which has been already mentioned. The poem is a bold protest against his imprisonment, and the lines below are quoted from it :

Gwr yssydd yn twr yn hir westi  
 Gwreidd teyrneidd teyrnwalch ri  
 Gwr am doddyw gwall oe golli o vyw  
 Gwreiddlyw a glyw y glodfori  
 Gwr teleid teituoedd lochi  
 Gwr teilu teilwng y voli  
 Gwr y gryd yn ryd gwr val Rodri mawr  
 Gwr eurglawr aessawr ysswydd holi  
 Gwr yn rwym gan rwyf Eryri  
 Gwr pei rydd val Run vab Beli  
 Gwr ny adei loegyr y losgi i dervyn  
 Gwr o hil Mervryn mawrvryd benlli  
 Gwr torvoedd gwr gwisgoedd gwisgi  
 Gwr gwasgawd kiwdawd kad weini  
 Gwr cadarn cadoedd reoli  
 Gwr cadwent kedwis haelyoni.

**Bleddyn Vardd** has contributed thirteen poems to Welsh literature, the most striking of which is his elegy to Llewelyn ab Gruffudd, which has the virtue of not over-idealising the departed hero. It would seem that the bard's effort was directed to give a true picture of the last prince of Wales, and this makes the poem of considerable interest. He strikes a true note at the outset by calling him 'gwawr gwreiddiaf' (the manliest hero); he also mentions the prince's seriousness of purpose, and his sincerity as a friend. The poem is short, and worth quoting in full :

Colles Gymru fawr gwawr gwreiddiaf,  
 Gwreiddllafn esgud gloywddrud glewaf,



Gwreiddlyw nid byw, ba wnaif o'i golled?  
Gwreiddlew hyged, roddged rwyddaf.

Gwr a lân drosom, gwr oedd drosaf  
Gwr oedd dros Gymru, hyf yr henwaf,  
Gwrawl Lewelyn, gwraf o Gymro;  
Gwr ni charai ffo i'r ffordd nesaf.

Gwr gwrdd yn cyrchu llu lledeithaf,  
Gwr gwyrddliw bebyll, gwersyll gorsaf,  
Gwreiddfab Gruffudd digraffaf am reg,  
Yn neddfau mawr deg Nudd a Mordaf.

Gwr gwayw rudd, gwr prudd megys Priaf,  
Gwr gwiw yn frenin fyddin falchaf,  
Gwr hylwydd y glod, gwr haelaf am draul,  
Hyd y cerdda haul i hwyl bellaf.

Gwr dig i ddistryw, llyw llyseiddiaf,  
Gwr dygn i alar, câr cywiraf;  
Gwr cywirgoeth, doeth, detholedig, o Fôn  
Hyd yn Nghaerlleon, y lle teccaf.

Gwr vu Lywelyn ger terfyn Taf,  
Gwawr kyhoedd wisgoedd wasgaroccaf;  
Gwr oedd arbennic bennaf o vilwyr,  
Hyd ym porth Wegyr eryr araf.

Y gwr a gymyrth enghyrth ynghaf  
Anghen dros bymhoes drymloes drymaf,  
A gymero vy rwyf rywoccaf vonhedd,  
Yn rann trugaredd vawredd vwyhaf.

*Myv. Arch. i. 368.*

The last bard, and by far the ablest, who sang the praises of the fallen prince was **Gruffydd ab yr Ynad Coch**. His elegy to Llewelyn ab Gruffudd is the finest composition of that age. It gives some conception of the terrible blow Llewelyn's death inflicted on the Cymry, and

the bard himself must have felt most poignant personal sorrow before he could have written such grief-stricken lines. In the acuteness of his loss, his imagination seizes upon the boldest imagery, and there can be no doubt that this poem is 'worthy of the occasion which called it forth, and forms a fitting wail on a hero's fall.' Part of it has been rendered in English verse in 'Jones's Relics,' and the lines which describe Nature's sympathy with the fallen prince do full justice to the original:

Nature herself is changed, and lo !  
 Now all things sympathise below !  
 Hark ! how the howling wind and rain  
 In loudest sympathy complain !  
 Hark ! how the consecrated oaks,  
 Unconscious of the woodman's strokes,  
 With thundering crash proclaim he's gone ;  
 Fall in each other's arms and groan !  
 Hark how the sullen tempests roar !  
 See how the white waves wash the shore !  
 See how eclipsed the sun appears,  
 See how the stars fall from their spheres !

Why are we left to mourn in vain,  
 The guardian of our country slain ?  
 No place, no refuge for us left,  
 Of homes, of liberty bereft,  
 Where shall we flee, to whom complain  
 Since our dear prince Llewelyn's slain ?

How faithful a reproduction these lines are in meaning and spirit will be discovered by a comparison with the lines quoted below :

Llawer llef druan fal ban fu'r Gamlan  
 Llawer deigr dros ran wedir greiniaw  
 O leas gwanas gwanar eurlaw

O laith Llywelyn cof dyn ni'm daw  
 Oerfelawg calon dan fron o fraw  
 Rewydd fal crinwydd y sy'n crinaw  
 Poni welwchwi hynt y gwynt a'r glaw  
 Poni welwchwi'r deri yn ymdaraw  
 Poni welwchwi'r môr yn merwinaw'r tir  
 Poni welwchwi'r gwynt yn ymgyweiriaw  
 Poni welwchwi'r haul yn hwyliaw'r awyr  
 Poni welwchwi'r syr wedi syrthiaw  
 Poni welwchwi Dduw dyniadon ynfyd  
 Poni welwchwi'r byd wedi bydiaw  
 Och hyd attad Dduw na ddaw—môr dros dir  
 Pa beth i'n gedir i ohiriaw  
 Nid oes le y cyrcher rhag carchar draw  
 Nid oes le y triger och o'r trigaw  
 Nid oes na chyingor na chlo nac egor  
 Unffordd i esgor brwyngyngor braw.

. . . . .  
 Pen pan las ni bu gas gymraw  
 Pen pan las oedd lesach peidiaw  
 Pen milwr pen moliant rhagllaw  
 Pen dragon pen draig oedd arnaw  
 Pen Llewelyn deg dygn o fraw i'r byd  
 Bod Pawl haiarn drwyddaw  
 Pen arglwydd poen dygngwydd amdaw  
 Pen fenaidd heb fanag arnaw  
 Pen a fu berchen ar barch naw canwlad  
 A naw canwledd iddaw  
 Pen teyrn heyrn heid o'i law  
 Pen teyrnwalch balch bwlch i ddeifniaw  
 Pen teyrnaidd flaidd flaengar ganthaw  
 Pen teyrnef nef i nawdd arnaw  
 Gwir freiniol frenin Aberffraw  
 Gwenwlad nef boed addef iddaw.

This latter verse mentions the terrible indignities inflicted upon Llewelyn's dead body, after the manner of those bar-

barous times. There is some historical foundation for this. Warrington says that the head of the hapless prince was first placed in the pillory at Cheapside, then carried by a horseman on a spear-point through the streets, and afterwards 'placed upon the highest turret in the Tower of London, where it remained a long time.'

In Gruffudd ab yr Ynad Coch, the bardism of the thirteenth century reached its highest point of perfection, and this poem, in particular, was its high-water mark. Worthy of note in it are its wealth of vocabulary, the bard's skill in the formation of new words, and its arrangement, the chief features of which are the repetition of the same word at the beginning of so many lines and of the same syllable at the end.

Incidentally the poem mentions a meeting which took place at Builth in Brecknockshire, to which Llewelyn had been invited to confer with other Welsh chiefs and some disaffected English lords, numbering eighteen in all. It was the betrayal of this design that led to his death.

Uched y cwynaf och o'r cwynaw  
 Arglwydd llwydd cyn lladd y *deunaw*. ]



## CHAPTER VI

### FROM THE DEATH OF LLEWELYN TO THE MIDDLE OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

LLEWELYN ab Gruffudd's death was followed by a period of petty insurrections which had a dispiriting effect upon the whole country. Chafing at the loss of their independence, and yet powerless to regain their freedom, and lacking able leaders, the Cymry could not well settle down to literary pursuits, and the next forty years, although not entirely barren of literature, produced nothing of outstanding merit, and only the chief bards will be noticed here.

One bard, **Gwilym Ddu o Arfon**, in two of his poems praises the courage of his countrymen, and especially that of a nobleman named Sir Gruffudd Llwyd, who had been knighted by King Edward, but had afterwards become disaffected, owing, it is said, to the oppression suffered by many of his compatriots. He first attempted negotiations with Robert Bruce of Scotland, but these failed ; and then, trusting to his own resources, he raised the standard of rebellion, and seized many castles, but was soon overthrown and imprisoned. Gwilym Ddu's verses in his praise, which are called 'Odlau'r Misoedd,' throw some light on the state of the country at the time. He bewails the numbers suffering captivity, more especially his hero Gruffudd, and the sad plight of the bards consequent upon the helpless-

ness of their late benefactors, although with true Celtic introspection he regards many of his country's woes as a punishment for transgressions. The burden of his song is that May and June, the months of joy and gladness, are now cheerless and comfortless, and the office of a bard is now but a vain and empty name.

Neud arfer ofer beirdd nifer byd.

He lays the unction to his soul, however, that his panegyric to his hero Gruffudd is devoid of flattery, a subtle rebuke to so many of his fraternity who flattered for gain. The poem reflects the settled gloom which followed upon the fate of Llewelyn. The country mourns, and looks as if it were doing Lenten penance :

Nid oes wledd na moes, massw ynyd yw'n gwlad.

That such a poem as this could be produced soon after the death of Llewelyn suffices to disprove the oft-told tale that Edward I. massacred the bards. The paucity of bardic effusions was due, no doubt, to their dejection natural upon the loss of their independence, which meant evil times to their patrons, and the prohibition of their own writings, as calculated to further disturb the country in its already unsettled state.

Gwilym Ddu uses what has been called the 'semi-lineal' rhyme with some frequency :

Neud cynhebig, ddig, ddygn adrossedd *drist*  
Er pan ddelid *Crist*, weddw athrist wedd !

His other poem to Sir Gruffudd Llwyd resembles the first one in tone, and the only other lines attributed to him are an elegy to the bard Trahaearn, a man of some eminence who presided at a bardic conference at Morganwg in 1300, and is supposed to have written under the name

Casnodyn. If this is so, it adds interest to the poem, which is for the most part a recapitulation of the names of the leading bards up to Trahaearn's time, and occasionally a short criticism of their work. For instance, he sums up Cynddelw as *ceinddawn* (of splendid gifts), Dafydd Benfras as *digas* (kindly, amiable), Einion ab Gwalchmai as *berw ffynnon* (a foaming fountain), Llygad Gwr as *uniawn* (correct), and concludes by referring to Trahaearn as superior to them all.

So far Welsh poetry had been somewhat restricted in its scope of subjects. War, eulogies of living warriors, and elegies after departed ones, were the subjects which mostly engrossed the bards; so much so, that the love poems of Howel ab Owain Gwynedd, and the Nature poems of Gwalchmai come as welcome breaks, cheerful and refreshing. It is true that the awkward efforts of Meilyr had ripened into the polished verse of Gruffudd ab yr Ynad Coch, but war and bloodshed are not the most palatable of subjects. The bards had been votaries at the fane of Mars so long that their odes tended to monotony. Now that they were no longer able, owing to Edward's prohibition, to stir up the passions of war, they found an outlet for their wealth of imagination in other directions. Many of the Romances were probably the product of this period, and love ousted war as the all-absorbing topic of the bards.

There is one poet in particular for whom a place must be found in this period, and he was the sweetest and most elegant exponent of the tender passion, with the possible exception of Dafydd ab Gwilym, of all Welsh poets. For some time Rhys Goch ap Rhicert had been assigned a place in the twelfth century, but Stephens amply demonstrated that this was impossible. The language and structure of his poems, the atmosphere of peace which

they breathe, the absence of political allusions and all reference to national feeling, point to the middle of the fourteenth century as the most likely time of their production, while the absence of *cynganedd*<sup>1</sup> in most of his poems is sufficient evidence to prove that they were not composed later. 'Can i Wallt Merch' is an admirable love-poem describing a lady's beauty in detail: her hair of loveliest gold, her forehead white as spray, her cheeks and lips redder than rosy wine—but the bard had best continue in his own vivid words:

Trwyn main moddus  
Bychan gweddus  
A min fel mel  
I'm dyn dawel.

Gwefus mirain liw cain cwrel  
A mân ddannedd a gwedd hoywgoeth  
Amlwg ymhen gwenn gymhenddoeth  
Gên bychan crwn a hwn mor hynod  
Ag yn nydd mynydd mewn gwn manod.

Her lightness of foot is described by exactly the same image as that of Olwen in the old Mabinogion story: not the smallest trefoil would bend beneath her:

Bun deg dawel ddawn ysgawn wisgi  
Ni phlyg manfeillion ar donn dani.

It is the same image as Scott gives:

E'en the slight hare-bell raised its head,  
Elastic from her airy tread;

and Rhys Goch ap Rhiccert often returns to it. In another poem he says:

Ag ni phlygai man y cerddai  
Dan wyn draed hon un o'r meillion.

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<sup>1</sup> See note, p. 47.



There is an ecstasy of love in the following passage :

Gorwedd yn dau ym mysgr blodau,  
 Gorwedd ar donn ymhlith meillion,  
 Finfin a gwen o'm holl awen,  
 Gwledd a gefais ar fin meinai,  
 Gwledd Dewi Sant ynghor Hodnant,  
 Gwledd Taliesin yn Llys Elphin,  
 Gwledd y ford gron yng Nghaerllion,  
 Gwledd angel glwys ym Mharadwys.

Hyn ar yn cân oedd y cyfan  
 Felly nynni cydfoddloni  
 I fyw yn lan ar wledd cusan  
 I farw yn dau o gusanau.

His love of Nature is equally passionate. He is in perfect sympathy with her. He feels the melancholy of winter, but the verdure of May revives him ; the growing trees rejoice his heart, and the song of the thrush, the nightingale, and the lark complete his joy. The following verses help to show his varying moods with those of Nature :

Gorthrwm a thrwm a thrist fyddaf,  
 Ni charaf un tro tra fo gaeaf,  
 Oni ddel Mai glasai glosydd  
 A gwyrddlen penn pob glwys irwydd  
 Mai imi glas urddas gwyrddail  
 Calon hoywfron hyfryd adail.

Cyntedd tirion mwynion manwydd  
 Ar lawr meillion gleision glosydd,  
 A chôg serchog ddoniog ddenus  
 Yn canu'n lwys lais cariadus,  
 A chiw bronfraith buriaith beraidd  
 Yn canu'n hardd loyw hoywfardd hafaid.

His love of birds is very conspicuous :

Eos o'r llwyn yn fwyn gyfanedd  
 Arail mewn gwyrddail gerddi maswedd,  
 A chyda'r dydd ehedydd hoywdon  
 A gân yn drylwyn fwyn bennillion,  
 A phob llawenydd hirddydd hyfryd  
 O'th gaf di Wenno yno ennyd.

With him begins the device, which afterwards became so popular, of feigning to send love-messages by birds or animals. In this, Dafydd ab Gwilym was his most conspicuous imitator. Here is an example :

Dos di'r fwyalch,  
 At ddyn feinfalch,  
 Dangos iddi  
 Mhoen am dani,  
 Bronfraith a gân  
 Ar wŷdd eirian,  
 Dwg oll o'm cwyn  
 At loyw forwyn.

In another beautiful poem he entrusts his message to a seagull, and an exquisite gem is his poem to the thrush, where these lines occur :

O goed y glynn  
 Prydai englyn,  
 O goed y rhiw  
 Canai 'n gywiw,  
 Brith oedd i fronn,  
 Mewn dail gleision.

Yn ymyl nant  
 Pawb a'i clywant,  
 Gan wawr y cân  
 Mal cloch arian,

Cynnal aberth  
Hyd awr anterth.

O gangau cyll  
Gwyrddion defyll  
Y cân gywydd  
I Dduw Dofydd,  
A charol serch  
O las lannerch.

*Note.*—There are some who assign to Rhys Goch ap Rhiccert a later date than this, on the ground that he uses the *cywydd* metre, which was introduced by Dafydd ab Gwilym, in some of his poems, and employs the *cynganedd*. But he has no whole poem in which he uses the latter consistently throughout. The probability is that he was a contemporary and imitator of the great bard who made the *cywydd* famous, but had not risen to so full a mastery of the *cynganedd* (although Dafydd ab Gwilym is not without blemishes in this respect), and preferred to write in the free metres which so admirably suited him. In his sweet love odes he is the poetical offspring of Gwalchmai and Howel ab Owain Gwynedd.

## CHAPTER VII

### GRUFFUDD AB MEREDYDD AB DAFYDD— DAFYDD AB GWILYM

THE most important of Dafydd ab Gwilym's immediate predecessors is **Gruffudd ab Meredydd** ab Dafydd, who, although he employs the *cynganedd* in some of his poems, does not do so regularly. In this he seems to have a fellow in Rhys Goch ap Rhiccert, who wrote some poems in *cynganedd*, but the majority in the free metres. Poetry was probably in a transition stage at this time, and it was the powerful influence of Dafydd ab Gwilym that settled it.

There are twenty-eight of Gruffudd ab Meredydd's poems in the *Myvyrian*, eight of which are composed to Tudur ab Gronwy of Penmynydd, Môn, and four to his son Gronwy Vychan, one an elegy, written in 1382, which states that the latter met his death by drowning.

This bard has several love odes, and a beautiful elegy on *Gwenhwyfar o Fôn*, in which there are some lines worthy of quotation, *e.g.*

Haul Wynedd neud bedd nid byw—unbennes  
Heb ynnill ei <sup>1</sup> chyfryw

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<sup>1</sup> The lines are quoted from the *Myvyrian Archaiology*, as are most of those up to the end of the fourteenth century. There was no such form as *ei* at this time. It is a late sixteenth-century form for which William Salesbury is responsible. Wherever it occurs previous to this, it should read *i*.



Henw gorhoffder a dderyw  
Hoen lloer hun oer heno yw.

Gwae fi lwysgrair Mair mawr i'm cyffry—deigr  
Am eurdegwch Cymry  
Myned mewn argel wely  
Meinir dwf is mynor dy.

Uchenaid fan  
Gelain deir-ran  
Galon dorri.  
Am Wenhwyfar  
Gwn drais galar  
Gan draws guli.

Am deg ei gwedd a haul Wynedd o haelioni  
Am ddiweirdeb am loerwyneb aml rieni  
Bardd hardd hirddysg eurglyd addysg ar glod iddi  
Bum i'w chanmawl fy nedwydd hawl f'enaidd oedd hi.

His other poems are on religious subjects—*Englynion y Sul*, two odes *I Fair*, and two *I Dduw*. He shows a great fondness for the *hupynt* metre, and uses it very effectively.

With **Dafydd ab Gwilym** Welsh literature begins a new era, the chief feature of which is the regular adoption in poetry of the strict principles of versification known as the *cynganedd*. This came about by a gradual development. Giraldus Cambrensis speaks of the fondness of the Cymry for alliteration, 'and that kind more especially which repeats the first letters or syllables of words.' This characteristic cannot fail to have been noticed in the quotations already given, and in it is found the germ of what afterwards developed into the *cynganedd*, a strict method of versification of which Dafydd ab Gwilym is the first regular exponent. The poetic conceit of beginning or ending long strings of lines with the same word or syllable is

more noticed in the work of the bards as we approach the middle of the fourteenth century. Gruffudd ab yr Ynad Coch, for instance, ends a hundred and four lines in his elegy upon Llewelyn ab Gruffudd with the syllable *-aw*.

One assumes that there must have been a council of the bards, and a clear understanding and adoption of these new principles of versification, before they could come into general use. Perhaps it was in this connection that the *eisteddfodau* known as the *Tair Eisteddfod Dadeni* were held, for there seems to be no satisfactory explanation of them on other grounds, and there are many who doubt they were ever held at all. But so important and definite a change could never have taken place without the consent of the whole bardic fraternity. That consent must have been given at their congresses, and the term *dadeni* is very suggestive of the demise of the old versification, and its regeneration under the new forms known as *cyghanedd*. The question of the exact order of its development is beset with many difficulties, into which it is not proposed to enter here, but an example of each of the three chief classes will perhaps be helpful.

I. *Cyghanedd Groes*.—In this the line is divided into two parts, and the consonants contained in the first part occur in the same order in the second: *e.g.*

*Maer dy dda | mawr yw dy ddawn.*

There is a variety of this known as *cyghanedd draws*, in which some of the consonants in the first part of the line are not in correspondence with those in the second. But the irregularity is in the middle of the line. The beginning and end have to correspond: *e.g.*

*Gorwedd ynt oll mewn gweryd.*

II. *Cynghanedd Sain*.—In this the line is divided into three parts, and the end of the second part rhymes with the end of the first; in the second and third parts the consonants have to correspond as in *cynghanedd groes*: e.g.

Myfi *yw* | *ffraethlyw* | *ffrwythlawn*.

In this line *yw* rhymes with *lyw*, and the consonants *ff*, *r*, *th*, *l*, in the second and third parts of the line correspond.

III. *Cynghanedd Lusk*.—In this there is no correspondence of consonants. The line is divided into two parts, the second of which must end in more than one syllable. The last syllable in the first part must rhyme with the last but one in the second, which must always be accented: e.g.

Dyna'r *parch* | *oll a archaf*.

So much that is haphazard has been written about Dafydd ab Gwilym's life, that one is forced to the conclusion that where conjecture is so rife, very little can be known with certainty. It is a curious coincidence that this should be so in the case of the supreme English poet and of the hitherto unsurpassed Welsh bard. The Iolo MSS., which do not always err on the side of accuracy, state that Dafydd ab Gwilym lived from 1300 to 1368. This is in conflict with most other authorities, and the weight of evidence is against it. Dr. Davies, whose dates generally stand the test of inquiry, places him at 1400. In the preface to the 1789 edition of Dafydd ab Gwilym's work, William Owen argues that he was born in 1340, and died in 1400. If the *marwnad* composed by the bard to Tudur ap Ieuan Llwyd of Gogerddan is authentic, it proves that he was alive in 1397, for that was the year of Tudur's death. It is thought that he could not have lived beyond 1400, because his poetry contains no mention of Owain

Glyndwr's insurrection, and such an upheaval, if he witnessed it, must have found expression in the writings of so eminent a bard. He was the son of Gwilym Gam and Ardudful, the sister of Llewelyn ab Gwilym Fychan of Emlyn, Cryngae, and Dolgoch, and was born at Bro Gynin, Llanbadarn Fawr, near Aberystwyth. The pathetic story told about his birth can be dismissed as fabulous. But there seems no doubt that he spent some of his early days at Gwern y Clepa with his uncle Ifor Hael, who was also the owner of Maesaleg, that pleasant mansion, the hospitality of which is so well described by the bard. It is said that he returned home to Bro Gynin, but that domestic strife forced him once more to seek the kindly shelter of Maesaleg. His mother's brother, Llewelyn ab Gwilym, a man of some importance, seems also to have taken an interest in him at this time. He was a skilled bard and taught his nephew the art of versifying, his other pupils being 'y tri brodyr Marchwial,' whom the bard mentions. At the death of Llewelyn, Dafydd ab Gwilym returned to Ifor Hael who made him his steward and his *bardd teulu*. This is his own description of his life there :

Myfi yw ffraethlyw ffrwythlawn  
Maer dy dda mawr yw dy ddawn

Mawr anrhydedd a'm deddyw  
Mi a gaf o byddaf byw  
Hel a chŵn nid haelach Ior  
Ac yfed gydag Ifor  
Saethu i geirw a saethynt  
A bwrw i weilch i'r wybr wynt  
A cherddau cildannau 'n deg  
A solos ym Maesaleg  
Chwarau ffristial a thalbwrdd  
Yr un gyflwr a'r gŵr gwrdd.



His other diversion, which he does not mention, must have been the writing of numerous odes. He is said to have won a chair for a composition written in a new metre—the *cywydd*—which he himself invented. It already existed, though not as a separate metre, in the two last lines of the *englyn unodl union*. It was Dafydd ab Gwilym's genius to see its utility as a separate metre, and it certainly became the most popular henceforth with the bards. It runs in couplets consisting of two heptasyllabic lines; if the accent is on the ultimate syllable in the first line, it must be on the penultimate in the second, and *vice versa*. In the first two lines quoted above, the accent is respectively on *ffrwyth* and *ddawn*; in lines 5-6 it is on *Ior* and *Ifor*. The lines in the *cywydd couplet* must always rhyme.

The odes *I'r Lleian*, *I yrru llatai i hudo Mynaches i'r llwyn*, *I Fynaches na welsai ond i hwyneb gan i chrefydd-wisg*, and many similar to these, are supposed to have been addressed by the bard to Ifor Hael's daughter, who, the story goes, was sent to a nunnery to escape his attentions, but there seems to be no foundation for this. The fact is that such themes were in many cases purely fanciful, and it is possible that the Nun, Dyddgu, and Morfudd were but creations of the bard's imagination, although it is fair to state that in his last poem he mentions the death of Morfudd amongst others whom he laments:

Mae Ifor a'm cynghorawdd?  
 Mae Nest oedd unwaith i'm nawdd?  
 Mae dan wŷdd Morfydd fy myd,  
 Gorwedd ynt oll mewn gweryd.

If Morfudd was anything more than an imaginative ideal, and the bard's statements respecting her are true, he is supposed, after seven long years, during each of which

he wrote to her full more than a score poems, to have been successful in his suit, as far as the maiden herself was concerned :

Cred o luned oleuni  
A roes da i moes i mi  
Llw i Dduw a'i llaw ddehau  
Llyna od gwn llw nid gau.

This is a clear reference to their betrothal ; but her family interposed, for they had pledged her to a rich old miser named Cynfrig Cynin, whom Dafydd ab Gwilym scornfully calls *Y Bwa Bach*, because of his deformity. Their elopement, their illegal marriage by Madog Benfras in the grove, the pursuit by the irate parents, the recovery of Morfudd, and her forced marriage to the hated miser, are all part of the bard's romantic story as set forth by himself ; and the conversation one May morning, which he has with a cuckoo, which bids him cease his longing and put away his hopeless passion, gives expression to his own reflections. The bird says :

Ni thâl porthi gofalon  
Bun iach ym mhellach am hon  
Gwra wnaeth Gwen gymen gall  
Gwiriwyd hi 'n wraig i arall.

But the bard's anger is aroused at the very suggestion, and he replies :

Taw ! na'm gwatwor am forwyn  
Y llais ni chredaf i'm llwyn.

He reminds the cuckoo of Morfudd's oath, and of their marriage in the grove. But the discreet bird replies :

Ynfyd yth glywaf, Dafydd  
Yn awr yn siarad dan wŷdd  
. . . . .

Ni chei Forfydd werydd wen  
Y fun eglur fynyglwen.

The bard in furious anger lays the bird under his curse, and wishes the winter to blight him with death :

Am a genaist i'm gwanu  
Yma'n y gwŷdd am Wen gu  
Deled it ddyddiau gaeaf  
A throi'r haul a threio'r haf  
A rhew yn dew ar y dail  
A gwywo coed a gwiail  
A'th ladd gan oerfel i'th lwyn  
Edn ynfyd a'th dôn anfwyn.

Then he turns his resentment upon Morfudd for her breach of faith, but he is immediately filled with remorse and forgives her, seeing that she had been forced into the marriage. He sends her a pleading message by a woodcock to entice her away, and, when that fails, a nightingale is sent to employ his sweetest notes with the same purpose. Finding this unavailing, he threatens her with loss of her fair looks by companionship with the *Bwa Bach*, and bids her flee before the transformation is complete. Then he beseeches S. Dwynwen to help him, and finally, having achieved his object, he sings one of his finest odes, heaping contumely the while upon her husband, and assuring her of the protection of Ifor Hael, whom he describes as the open enemy of the *Bwa Bach*. In Ifor's hall they will be safe :

Hawddamor beunydd yma  
A gawn gyda phob dawn da  
Llwyn is twyn yn llawn ystôr  
A lles hefyd llys Ifor  
Ifor yw trysor traserch  
A rhyswr a sawdwr serch  
Gelyn blin heb gyfrinach  
Yw r gwrda i'r Bwa bach.

Five odes he sings describing their joyous sylvan life, but alas! the emissaries of Cynfrig Cynin track them down. Morfudd is dragged away to her lawful spouse, the bard is imprisoned for his temerity, and writes to Morfudd in rather a petulant spirit, blaming her for acceding to his request:

Peraist annog fy nghrogi  
Pe'm cerit ni fynnit fi.

He changes his mood, however, and beseeches her to help him to pay the fine, but does not fail to punctuate his resentment against the Bwa Bach. The sincerity of feeling here tends to show the reality of these events, especially as it is recorded that the men of Morganwg nobly came to his rescue and paid the fine. No sooner is he free, however, than he begins his perilous quest of Morfudd once more, recording his exploits in his remaining *cywyddau*, which, taken all together, form one of the longest *rhiangerddi* in any language.

It will be seen that Dafydd ab Gwilym has imitated Rhys Goch ap Rhiccert (if, indeed, the latter preceded him in point of time) in the way he has made Nature and the animal world, especially winged creatures, the emissaries of his love. He regarded Nature herself as instinct with life. He was absorbed in her, and found in her a source of inspiration. He is not always free, it is true, from the conventionalities common to the bards of his age, but there are passages of striking beauty in his work which show not only close observation of her moods, but also the dominating influence these had upon his muse. Of Summer he sings:

Ysgwyd lwyth o ber ffrwythydd  
Yn rad gwrs ar hyd i gwŷdd,



Rho'th gnwd fal ffrwd ar bob ffrith,  
 Ar gweunydd a'r tir gwenith,  
 Gwisg berllan, gwinllan, a gardd,  
 A'th lawnder a'th ffrwythlondardd,  
 Gwasgar hyd i daiar deg  
 Gu nodau dy gain adeg.

This is not only a picture of the abundance, charm, and beneficence of Summer, but the season is endowed with life. It is her own vitality that enables her to strew her path with these benignant gifts. The sharp contrast drawn between her and Winter is as real as though he described two persons irreconcilably opposite ; with a sigh at Summer's departure he bewails the blight and melancholy of Winter in equally vivid manner. He strides through the land like a giant destroyer, leaving havoc and ruin in his train :

Weithian o'n gwlad yr aethost,  
 A daeth bâr hyd daear dost,  
 Mae pob llwyn ar dwyn a dôl  
 Ys dyddiau yn gystuddiol.

Gaeaf sy'n lladd y gwiail,  
 A dug o goedydd y dail,  
 A'i chwithig wynt yn chwythu,  
 A'i ruad arth, a'i rew du.

It is upon his Nature and Love poetry that Dafydd ab Gwilym's fame rests. It is difficult to decide which of the two influences was strongest upon him. Indeed, one often merges into the other, for in many of the Morfudd odes Nature becomes the central theme. Amongst Welsh poets he stands apart in his treatment of these two subjects, and when compared with their ablest exponents in the poetry of other great literatures, he must still hold an honourable place.

In his attitude towards religion he joins issue with many previous bards in his hostility to the monks and priests of his day, and in this respect he may be said to have done nothing more than continue a prejudice which was based, to a certain extent, upon the clashing of their interests where patrons were concerned. But Dafydd ab Gwilym strikes a more genuine note of difference. He was opposed to some of the doctrines which obtained prominence in the current theology of his time, notably that of purgatory, to which he shows a determined hostility :

Cosbwr y marwawl bechawd,<sup>1</sup>  
Casbeth gennyf bregeth brawd.

Nid ydyw Duw mor greulon  
Ag y dywed hen ddynion.

It may be argued that his own moral code, to judge from his poems, was not as lofty as it might have been, and that would predispose him to the attitude of mind shown here, but this is scarcely tenable when one considers the age in which he lived. It is far more likely that he was in touch with the intellectual movements of his time, on the Continent, to a greater extent than has been generally supposed ; and, influenced by them in his mental outlook, he adopted an attitude on some religious questions, which obtained greater prominence a century later, and which entitles him to be regarded as a herald of the Reformation movement in this country. It has been demonstrated that his works show the influence of Petrarch and Boccaccio, and a man of his genius would naturally be acquainted with as much of European thought as filtered through into this country.

<sup>1</sup> This line, if correctly reproduced, is an instance of his occasional lapses from correct *cynganedd*.

Dafydd ab Gwilym was practically the first writer of Modern Welsh ; he certainly had more share than any one else in the formation of the modern literary language. The language of his poems represents the ordinary speech of educated people of his day, and it is a regularly modified form of the medieval literary language. He may be said to have set the fashion for writing *cywyddau* and for *cynghanedd*, and no new principle was introduced into the latter after his time. This was the prevalent form of poetry until the time of Edmund Prys. How close the language has adhered to the standard set by Dafydd ab Gwilym is significantly seen if a *cywydd* composed by each of these well-known bards is placed side by side and carefully compared. For two hundred years Dafydd ab Gwilym's forms remained unchanged. William Salesbury tried to effect what he considered an improvement upon them, but he utterly failed. The writers of the 1620 Bible returned to the Welsh of Dafydd ab Gwilym and Edmund Prys, and that Bible is, of course, the standard Welsh of to-day.

The bard's well-known *Cywydd i'r Llwynog* and his inimitable *Cywydd y Daran* may be cited as instances of the strength and beauty of his language. The latter can scarcely be equalled, as the following lines show :

Taro a wnaeth, terwyn oedd,  
 Trwst taran tros y tiroedd ;  
 A ffrydiaw croyw-wlaw creulawn,  
 A phoeri mellt yn ffrom iawn.  
 Durun fflam y daran fflwch  
 Dug warwfa'n digrifwch ;  
 Trwst enbyd tristyd i'r trwyn,  
 Trwst mawr yn tristau morwyn.  
 Twrf a glyw pob tyrfa glau,  
 Twrw crug yn tori creigiau.

Taran a ddug trinoedd ynn,  
 Trwst arfau'r wybr tros derfyn ;  
 Tân aml a dwr tew'n ymladd,  
 Tân o lid, dwr tew'n i ladd.  
 Clywais fry, ciliais o fraw,  
 Cawrlais udgorn y curwlaw. *curdau*  
 Mil fawr yn ymleferdydd,  
 O gadwynau sugnau sydd.  
 Braw a ddisgynodd i'm bron,  
 Berw deri o'r wybr dirion.  
 Gwyllt yr awn a'm gwallt ar ŵyr,  
 Gan ruad gwn yr awyr.

His *awdlau* generally show the influence of the older poets, and are not so readable as the rest of his poems.

Borrow, in his *Wild Wales*, claims that he had the combined gifts of an Ovid, Horace, Martial, and Tyrtæus, and thinks some of his more serious poetry towards the end of his life would not have been unworthy of Cædmon. He also expresses the opinion that 'he was the greatest genius who had appeared in Europe after the Revival of Literature.'

The year of his death is, as was stated, uncertain. The Iolo MSS. affirm that he was buried at Tal-y-llychau, but this has been shown to be incorrect. Gruffudd Gryg, a contemporary bard, who had a contest in verse with Dafydd ab Gwilym, composed to him two *marwnadau*, which afford valuable testimony on this point. The first he wrote when a false report of his rival's death was circulated by their common friends in order to end the unhappy quarrel between them. It had the desired effect, and Gruffudd Gryg in much grief wrote :

Dafydd ab Gwilym ymy  
 Y bu fraw am na bai fry,



Yn nhir Deheubarth yn hardd,  
*Ac aerfa rhof ac eurfardd.*

The last line shows that this was the *first marwnad*, for it mentions the quarrel. Therefore, it can be concluded that the other *marwnad* was written when the bard really died, and it contains lines showing that his burial-place was Ystrad Fflur (Strata Florida) near Aberystwyth:

Yr ywen i oreuwas  
Ger mur Ystrad Fflur a'i phlâs.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE BARDS OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

#### I

THE chief political event in the beginning of the fifteenth century was the insurrection of Owain Glyndwr in 1402, and the bards who wrote during that stirring time shall first be noticed, chief amongst them being **Iolo Goch**. In the *Heraldic Visitations of Wales*, by Lewys Dwnn, the following interesting note concerning this bard appears: 'Iolo Goch, Master of Arts, Poet Lawrell or Cheif Poet, who hath written concerning the three provinces of Wales, and he was the cheifest of Poets.' He was a native of Llanefydd, Denbighshire, and lived at Coed Panton in that village. Dwnn's statement points to his having received a good education at one of the universities, and to the high estimate of his writings as a bard which prevailed in his day. Some writers have thought that he flourished *early* in the fourteenth century, but this is quite impossible, seeing that he took an active part in the Glyndwr rebellion, and employed his muse effectively in rousing Welsh patriotic sentiment and persuading his countrymen to enlist under Glyndwr's banner.

Several of his poems sing the praises of his hero and patron. In one he gives a picture of his court before the insurrection. In another he refers to the betrayal of

Richard II., and implies that Owain Glyndwr's rising was a sequel to this. *Cywydd i Owain Glyndwr pan oedd fwy i'rwysg* gives a glowing description of the Welsh warrior at the height of his glory, and well expresses the sentiment of Welsh independence in the lines :

Cael arglwydd llawn arwydd llain  
O honyn hwy i hunain.

*Cywydd y Seren* was written on the appearance of a comet in 1402, which Iolo declared was a portent of Glyndwr's success, and through it he influenced many of his superstitious countrymen to join in the rising. Shakespeare mentions this same phenomenon, and has put these words into Glyndwr's mouth :

At my nativity  
The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes  
Of burning cressets ; and at my birth  
The frame and huge foundation of the earth  
Shaked like a coward.

Iolo writes upon a variety of other topics. His *Cywydd i'r Llafurwr* gives a very natural description of the farming class of his day. He depicts them as religious according to their lights, and very careful of almsgiving :

O rhoddes ef wr hoywryw  
Offrwm a'i ddegwm i Dduw.

Although their knowledge was scanty, they were charitable and hospitable. Content with their husbandry, they led honest, peaceful lives, following the plough with a song, and making a frugal meal under the shelter of some hedge. In this ode he refers to *Hu Gadarn* as the father of Welsh agriculture.

His *Cywydd i'r Byd*, *Cywydd i'r Drindod*, and *Cywydd*

*ar yr ystyriaeth o enedigaeth dyn* deal with religious topics, and his views are Scriptural, but do not identify him with any doctrine peculiarly Roman. This lends colour to the suggestion that Lollardism had begun to influence the upper classes in Wales at this time. Lord Cobham is said to have sheltered at Aber Tanad, the palace of Owain Glyndwr.

Other religious odes of his are *Oedran a phara pethau bydol a phethau nefol*, *Cyffes Iolo Goch*, and *Awdl Gyffes*.

Judging from his *Cywydd i'r Llong*, he was not enamoured of the sea, for he says of the ship :

Rocian a wnai bai o beth  
Ar i hochr oer i hachreth  
Cosb im oedd er cosbi mŷr  
Castell ing cist y llongwyr.

He wrote an ode to *Syr Howel y Fwyall*, a noted soldier who had been in the retinue of the Black Prince at the battle of Poitiers, 1356. The story was that Sir Howel with one blow of his battle-axe beheaded the King of France's horse, and that he was authorised ever afterwards to quarter the battle-axe upon his coat-of-arms.

Amongst his chief *marwnadau* may be mentioned those to Llewelyn Goch ab Meurig Hên, Sir Rhys ap Thomas of Dinevor, and Dafydd ab Gwilym. Of Llewelyn Goch he writes :

Prydydd fardd priod addfwyn,  
Proffwyd cerdd praff ydyw cwyn.

Primeist cywydd ofydd oedd,  
Profedig prif-wr ydoedd ;  
Prydfawr fu'r ffyddfrawd mawr mau,  
Prydlyfr i bob per odlau.



He also depicts the last stage in Owain Glyndwr's career in *Cywydd i Owain Glyndwr wedi i fyned ar ddifancoll*, the misfortunes that overwhelmed him in 1405, when over two thousand of his men were slain, and Owain himself sought refuge in flight. Glyndwr, however, recovered this blow for a time, and took the field once again with the assistance of some French soldiers.

Iolo Goch wrote some things in lighter vein, for instance, *Cywydd i Farf y Bardd a'i rhwystrodd i gusanu i gariad*, a love poem, as its title indicates, but he seems happier in more solemn themes.

**Llywelyn Goch ab Meurig Hen** lived at Nannau, near Dolgellau, and seven of his compositions appear in the *Myvyrian Archaiology*, but he is best known by his celebrated poem *Marwnad Lleucu Llwyd*. The story of this elegy is interesting, because it treats of a tragic circumstance in the bard's own life. Lleucu Llwyd was a beautiful maiden who lived at Pennal on the banks of the Dyfi, with whom the bard fell in love, and wished to marry. Her parents, however, placed every obstacle in his way, and, when Llywelyn was on a bardic tour in South Wales, they thought they would nip the romance in the bud by telling the maiden that the bard had married another. When she heard it, she expired on the spot; and when the bard, upon his return, heard the awful tidings, his feelings may well be imagined: they find expression in this beautiful elegy, which, despite some faults in the *cynganedd*, is one of the finest emotional odes in the language. The following lines are quoted from it:

Llyma haf llwm i hoew-fardd,  
A llyma fyd llwm i fardd!  
Nid oes yng Ngwynedd heddiw  
Na lloer, na llewyrch, na lliw,

Er pan rodded—trwydded trwch—  
 Dan lawr dygn dyn loer degwch.  
 Y ferch wen o'r dderw brenol,  
 Arfaeth ddig yw'r fan o'th ol!  
 Cain i llun, canwyll Wynedd,  
 Cyd bych o fewn caead bedd!  
 F'enaïd! cyfod i fyny,  
 Agor y ddaear-ddor ddu!

Mae yma hoewdra hydraul,  
Ūwch dy fedd, hoew annedd haul,  
 Wr llwm i wyneb hebod,  
 Llywelyn Goch, gloch dy glod.  
 Yn cynnal hyd tra canwyf,  
 Cariad amddifad ydd wyf;  
 Udfardd yn rhodio adfyd,  
 O Dduw gwyn! hyd hyn o hyd.  
 Myfi, fun fwyfwy fonedd,  
 Echdoe a fum uwch dy fedd,  
 Yn gollwng deigr lled eigrbraff  
 Ar hyd fy wyneb yn rhaff:  
 Tithau, harddlun y fun fud  
 O'r tewbwill ni'm hatebud!

These lines are sufficient to show that Llewelyn Goch was a really gifted bard. Of his other poems, his *Awdl i Dduw* is of some interest, because it reflects his religious sentiments. It contains an *englyn* for each day of the week, and a short creed, but in poetic merit it cannot compare with the beautiful ode to Lleucu.

One of the most excellent bards of the early fifteenth century was **Gruffudd Llwyd ab Dafydd ab Einion Lygliw** who was *bardd teulu* to Owain Glyndwr, and employed his muse with considerable success in his cause. His stirring odes influenced many of the better class, notably the educated Welshmen of the period, to rally round

Glyndwr's standard. His chief composition is that written to his patron when the insurrection was at its height. He addresses him thus :

Eryr digrif afrifed,  
Owain helm gain hael am ged ;  
Aer y Glyn, meistr rhoddlyn rhydd  
Dyfrdwy fawr, dwfr diferydd.  
Clywais o ben rhyw genad,  
Cei ras Duw cywir ystâd.  
Cael yn yr aer calon rwydd,  
O honod fawrglod f'arglwydd.  
F'enaïd uwch Dyfrdwy faenawr,  
Fy ner, fwrw llawer is llawr.  
Gwelai bawb draw o'th law lân  
Gwiw fawldaith gwayw gafaeldan,  
Pan oedd drymaf dy lafur,  
Draw yn ymwriaw a'r mur.  
Hyd ddydd brawd, medd dy wawdydd,  
Hanwyd o feilch hynod fydd  
Dy lafn glwys, dau finiog, glain,  
Hel brwydr da hwyli Brydain :  
Wrth droi yn brisg a'th wisg wen,  
A'th ruthr i'r maes a'th rethren.

He has another poem interesting for the light it throws upon the social conditions of the time, and the administration of justice. It is written to the Chief Justice at Carmarthen, whom he addresses as *Syr Dafydd*, begging him to secure the acquittal of Morgan Dafydd Llewelyn for killing a magistrate on the Carmarthen Bench. He suggests that the 'twelve good men and true,' who were to sit upon the case in Gwenllian Hir's tavern, should be selected from amongst the bards, and that he himself be one. He saves the magistrate the trouble of choosing the other eleven by naming them all in his poem, and saying a

word in praise of each. Incidentally he mentions the loftier social status of the bards than that of those who generally served on juries at the time. He had already prejudged the case himself, and declares that if the other eleven hold the same view, Morgan Dafydd's innocence will be amply proved :

Os dydd y cydeisteddir  
Yn nhal ty Gwenllian Hir,  
Diddan yw ynt y deuddeg  
Om barn yn y dafarn deg.  
Er deulong o aur dilyth,  
Ni adwaenan Forgan fyth ;  
Boed melldith Mair fengrair fro  
A Duw ar i gadawo.

**Rhys Goch Eryri** was an ardent admirer and supporter of Owain Glyndwr, and was a gentleman of means who lived at Hafod Garegog, near Beddgelert. Dr. Davies gives his date as 1420, but that was, probably, the year of his death. His connection with the Snowdonia district comes to light in a poem in which he addresses Carnedd Llywelyn from the top of Snowdon. He is supposed to have sheltered Owain Glyndwr at one time, when the latter narrowly escaped capture, and only succeeded in eluding his pursuers by climbing the difficult Simnai y Foel, on Moel Hebog. This was probably in 1405, when his star waned for a time, and he was a fugitive. In the poem in which Rhys Goch addresses Carnedd Llywelyn, he predicts a renewed outbreak of hostilities in the summer :

Yr haf i bydd y rhyfel,  
E ddarfu barnu y bel.

His genius as a bard was acknowledged by the ablest men of his own day. His best-known poems are *Cywydd*



*ateb i Sion Cent*, with whom he had a controversy, *Cywydd i Feuno Abad*, *Cywydd i'r Byd*, *Cywydd i'r Llwynog*, *Cywydd y Farf*, *Cywydd Marwnad Gwilym ap Gruffudd un o hynaif y Penrhyn*, *Cywydd Marwnad i Lywelyn Moel y Pantri*, *Cywydd Marwnad Owain Glyndwr*, and *Awdd Duchan i'r Llwynog am iddo ladd y Paun*. The latter poem seems to have claimed much attention, and it affords an excellent illustration of the device of the Welsh bards to make the sound answer to the sense. It is so full of consonantal difficulties that Sion Tudur suggested that it would be a good test of a man's sobriety, for, he said, no man when drunk could possibly pronounce it.

One of his poems, an elegy to Gruffudd ab Robert Fychan, has been said to be a curious blend of Christianity and Druidism, but the hollowness of this would-be mystic, Druidic philosophy of the Cabalists has been amply shown. His elegy to Owain Glyndwr contains some fine lines :

Heddiw mae argae oergwm,  
Hil bedd mawr ar y llawr llwm ;  
A oes obaith in iaith ni,  
Faith gof owdyl fyth gyfodi ?  
Oes, oes, cwynwn anfoes caith,  
Bo iawn gwbwl, byw yw'n gobaith.  
Pa bryd, feibion digonawl,  
Pencerddaidd hydr mydr a mawl,  
I cawn ni Aleliwia  
O farn yn Duw, Frenin da ?  
Pan ddel caledwaith chwaith chweg,  
Cnawd pwy o'r mordwy mowrdeg ?  
Gloywfab cas hydrddrych gwych gwydn,  
Golau y marchog elydn,  
Ag yna awen genau,  
Yn y tir gwir ag nid gau.

Pawb y sydd cyn deunydd dail  
 Ddiryfig dan ddur efail.  
 Pa ham draw nad ym lawen?  
 Er Mair pâr bader, Amen.

Rhys Goch Eryri was buried in the old churchyard at Beddgelert. There is still shown at Hafod Garegog a seat consisting of large stones placed in the form of a chair and called *Cadair Rhys*.

**Sion Cent** was a contemporary of Rhys Goch, and was a very eminent bard and learned divine. He was Collector of Kentchurch in Herefordshire, where he was the near neighbour of Sir John Oldcastle, who seems to have influenced him in his opinions, for he inclined strongly to Lollardism. He wrote various treatises in Latin on theological subjects, and every MS. copy of Welsh poetry generally contains something of his prolific writings. In the popular mind his great learning endowed him with magical skill, and supernatural power was attributed to him. His patrons were the Scudamores of Kentchurch, and it is said that a representative of the family still possesses a portrait of him, which shows a strong, intellectual, and kindly face.

As one might expect from his office (some assert that he was in Orders) and training, his poems are tinged with theological ideas. Denunciation of sin, the evils of the world, the imminence of death, and other grave topics form the burden of his muse. His outlook is aptly expressed in the couplet:

Astud boen, ystod benyd,  
 Ystâd beirdd yn studio byd.

Some of his lines have quite a Miltonian strain; he is perplexed by the same themes, and takes the same view

of life as the great Puritan, but lacks, of course, his strident, majestic measures. The *cywydd* was rather too thin a metre for some of his subjects. Here is an example of one of his theological poems :

Cyntaf dial medd Psaleg  
 Erioed a fu er dysgu'n deg,  
 Oedd yrru Liwsffer ddiriaid  
 O'r nef lle'r oedd fawr i naid ;  
 Uchel angel heb gelu,  
 Euraidd i fodd erioed a fu ;  
 A meistr oedd ym mwstr Ion  
 Yngolwg yr angylion.

Cwypodd y cythraul campus,  
 Ef a'i lu aeth rhannu rhêfs.

*Cywydd i Dduw* is a paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer, and possesses an interest from the vivid contrast it presents between the condition of the lost and the blessedness of the saved.

Satan is realistically described as

Wynbwr brwnt aniben,  
 Corniog, danheddog, hen.

And Hell :

Lle mae gwlad ddrwg i hagwedd,  
 Heb barch, heb gariad, heb hedd,  
 Ond ochain a dadsain dig  
 Ar i gwar awr ag orig.

Then follows the description of Heaven :

Lle ceir well well y cariad  
 A rhôl deg gyda'r hael Dâd ;  
 Yno cael hael wehelyth  
 Lle ni ddaw na glaw na gwlith,  
 Nag ia, nag eira, nag ôd

Na thymestl fyth i ymod ;  
 Ond pob llawnder per, perawd,  
 Mewn ffydd, mewn cariad, mewn ffawd ;  
 Pob cân, pob chwareu, pob cerdd,  
 Pob mawl wisg, pob melusgerdd,  
 Pob rhyw fath, pob rhai a fydd  
 Yn orlawn o lawenydd ;  
 Syched, niwed, na newyn  
 Ni ad Duw i enaid dyn,  
 Pawb yn i rhif yn ifanc,  
 Heb dro, heb niwed, heb dranc.

He boldly denounces the luxury and corruption of the churchmen of his day in his famous *cywydd*, written after the manner of a parable, against intemperance and worldliness, in which he says :

Y brodyr, pregethwyr gynt  
 A oeddynt heb dda iddynt.

An old, inscriptionless tombstone in the churchyard at Grosmont is supposed to mark his grave.

**Meredydd ap Rhys** is said to have been a clergyman living at Ruabon, and the bardic teacher of Dafydd ab Edmwnd. Judging from his poems, he was the Isaac Walton of the bards. *Cywydd i ofyn rhwyd pysgota* is of excellent workmanship, and as the lines show, in which he mentions that Lent and Fridays were not insupportable, because they demanded practice in the art he loved, he was not entirely devoid of humour :

Hel rwyf heolau'r afon  
 Ar hyd dwr a dryll rhwyd don  
 Gweled pysgod brig Alun  
 Gwilio'r wyf heb gael yr un,  
 Praff awdur in proffwydwyd  
 Prudd yw Meredydd am rwyd



Efo i praw gwell gan fab Rhys  
Eitha'r dwr na thir dyry  
Esgud ir af ir afon  
A chael haf i chwilio hon

Gras mawr y Grawys ym oedd  
Gael rhwyd a gwilio rhydoedd.

Having obtained his rod, his efforts meet with unqualified success :

A mil o bysgod Maelawr  
Ar fy mwrdd llyna rif mawr,  
Pawb yno sydd pob nos Iau  
Yn aros y Gwenerau,  
Deliais ar Nos Nadolig,  
Pam waeth dydd caeth na dydd cig?

His love of the pastime is well described in the couplet :

Mewn awr dda minnau ar ddwr  
O fodd hael a fydd heliwr.

He compares himself to Madog ab Owain Gwynedd in his love for the water, and upon some of his lines theorists based the absurd notion that Madog discovered America.

Madog wych, mwyedig wedd,  
Iawn genau Owain Gwynedd,  
Ni fynnai dir, f'enaïd oedd,  
Na da mawr ond y moroedd.

Madog died about 1170, and it has been supposed that he was killed by Llywarch ab Llewelyn. In his *Awdl yr Haearn Twymn*, which has been noticed, that bard asks to be proved innocent of the charge. In any case, it is strange that it should have taken three hundred years to find out that Madog discovered America, for Meredydd ap Rhys wrote in the middle of the fifteenth century.

**Dafydd Nanmor.**—It is difficult to assign to this bard his proper date, because it appears there were two of the same name. But if it is true that Rhys Goch lived up to 1420, which is very probable, for he outlived Owain Glyndwr, and that Dafydd Nanmor was his disciple and his rival for the affections of the fair Gwen o'r Ddôl, as the poems of each bard testify, then the date which Dr. Davies gives, 1460, must be approximately correct.

Various places claim to be Dafydd Nanmor's birthplace—a certain sign that he was of some eminence in the bardic world. Each place has a tradition of his having been discovered by Rhys Goch Eryri gathering cockles with some other youths on the *traeth* adjacent to his home, and that he showed a genius for *cynghanedd* in his reply to Rhys, who addressed the urchins in that form. Penmorfa in Eifionydd, and Harlech in Meirionydd, both lay claim to him, but they have a rival in the little village of Nanmor which supplied him with his bardic *nom-de-plume*. There is a tradition that he was the natural son of Rhys Goch, who, finding the youth intelligent and a born versifier, adopted him and taught him the bardic lore. The truth is that the early part of his life is lost in obscurity, and that the traditions were only circulated when he had obtained some distinction as a bard, a certain road to the affections of his countrymen.

The first lines of thirty-one of his poems are found on the cover of the *Greal*, five of them are printed in *Gorchestion Beirdd Cymru*, and twelve in *Ceinion Llenyddiaeth Cymru*. They mostly consist of satires upon the monks, duels in verse with Rhys Goch, and a few love poems in which the bard excels. His poem in praise of a lady of the Gogerddan family, a daughter of Rhydderch ap

Ieuan Llwyd, illustrates this. It is entitled *Cywydd i Wallt Llio*, and contains a few happy similes :

Llio eurwallt lliw arian  
Llewych mellt ar y lluwch mân ;  
Mae ar i phenn seren serch  
Lliw rhuddaur Llio Rhydderch.

Mae r gwallt mwya ar a gaid  
Am y gwarr fal mwg euraid,  
Ni âd dy gwyn mewn tŵ gwallt  
Farw Llio friallenwallt.

Dafydd Nanmor wrote a *cywydd* and an *awdl* to Rhys o'r Tywyn (? the Abbot Rhys of Ystrad Tywy), and an *Awdl Farwnad Tomas, Arglwydd y Tywyn*. His *Cywydd y Cae Bedw* is a pretty little Nature poem, and might have been written, as far as its quality goes, by Dafydd ab Gwilym himself. In an ode entitled *Cywydd Damon a Phidas*, he tells the old story of Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse, who had condemned Damon to death, but allowed him to go home to exchange farewells with his family before the execution of his sentence, provided he could find a substitute who would suffer for him in case of his non-return. Such a man was found in Pythias, who almost had to bear the consequences of his noble act of self-sacrifice, owing to the unavoidable delay of Damon in returning. The latter arrived just as the sentence was about to be carried into effect upon his friend.

**Howel Swardwal.**—If early historians are correct, the name Swardwal is of Norman origin, and one of that name is said to have enlisted in the Crusades in the time of William II. Howel lived at Cydewain in Montgomeryshire, and afterwards at Machynlleth and Newtown, respectively. He is stated to have been an authority on heraldry,

and to have sat upon a Royal Commission in 1460, which would require the knowledge of an expert in that branch. The internal evidence of his poems shows that he flourished a little earlier than Lewis Glyn Cothi, for they both wrote the praises of the Vaughans of Bredwardine, but the latter has poems to later members of that family than Swardwal mentions. The poems of Howel Swardwal are permeated with the religious ideas of his age; for example, his *Cywydd i Fair Wryyf*, from which the following lines are taken :

Y fun deg a fendigwyd,  
Fry o nef Fair Wryy yn wyd ;  
Dy ddelw di addolir,  
Loyw deg yn ymylau dir.

Pan ganer yr opheren  
Ef air a chwyr at y ferch wen,  
Kwyr ar fy llun fy hunan,  
A chwyr yn dorch iw roi'n dân :  
Lle i bwy fi yn gweddiaw  
Gwelir kannwyll hir im llaw,  
Dann llef yr wyf yn dwyn llin  
Yn olau ar fy neulin.

Dy garu a wybüum,  
Darllain dy bylgain y bum,  
A gwrando yn graff pan gaffwyf  
Opheren, Fair wen, yr wyf.

**Ieuan ab Howel Swardwal** was an abler bard than his father, and an eminent scholar. He is said to have held a post at one of the Oxford colleges, and was looked upon by the Welshmen who frequented the University in the middle of the fifteenth century as their leader. At his death a bard named Howel Dafydd sang :



Dig wyf am dewi gofeg  
Yn pen yn Rhydychen deg.

He wrote a very remarkable English poem, entitled *Awdl i Dduw ac i Fair Wryf*, in Welsh metres and orthography, the first verse of which reads :

O meichti ladi owr leding—tw haf  
At hefn owr abeiding  
In tw thei ffest eferlasting  
I set a brains ws tw bring.

This was written in answer to a challenge by an Englishman 'nad oedd na mesur na chynghanedd yng Nghymraeg.'

He also sang, like his father and Lewis Glyn Cothi, to the Vaughans of Bro Dorddun and Bleddfach.

He had a duel in verse with **Llawdden**, a bard and antiquary, who was vicar of Machynlleth in the middle of the fifteenth century. The dispute arose because Ieuan, who had been despatched by Llawdden as a *llatai* (messenger) to a maiden, abused his trust and transferred to her his own affections. Llawdden rebuked him severely for his treachery, saying :

Teg oedd Ifan fal cannwyll,  
Llyna deg yn llawn o dwyll !  
A drwg yw r unrhyw anrheg  
Kydwybod hwn, kyd bo teg :  
Brawd ffydd o herwydd hiraeth  
Oeddwn gynt iddaw yn gaeth.

Llawdden was a native of Dyffryn Llychwr in Carmarthen, and returned there in his old age. His pupil Iorwerth Fynglwyd, wrote his *marwnad*, and it is a very worthy composition, as these few selected lines testify :

Athraw ym oedd aeth a'r mawl  
Am wybodau mebydawl.

A minnau fal y mynor  
Yn wylaw am f'athraw'n fôr.

Aeth Llawdden a'i dalcen doeth,  
Yr unwedd a gŵr annoeth,  
A'i enaid aeth yn uniawn  
I'r nef mewn hedd i wledd lawn,  
Ac yno'n fardd a'i gân fyth  
Yn addoli Duw'n ddilyth.

And, visiting his grave on a subsequent occasion, in the Llandeilo Tal-y-Bont churchyard, he wrote :

Llawdden a'i Awen Eos—a ballodd,  
Pwy bellach i'n dangos?  
Dan y ddaear mae'n aros,  
Dall yw'n iaith mae'n dywyll nos.

**Ieuan Brydydd Hir Hynaf**, so called to distinguish him from a later bard (the Rev. Evan Evans, who, in spite of the fact that his real bardic name was Ieuan Fardd ac Offeiriad, was popularly called Ieuan Brydydd Hir), flourished about the middle of the fifteenth century. Tudur Penllyn, a contemporary bard, shows that he was a blacksmith by trade, in the lines :

Dyro dy gledda Ieuan,  
Dur tawch, rhwng y dŵr a'r tân.

Ieuan has a fine ode to old age—*Cywydd yn dangos byrred oes dyn*, a satiric ode written to Tudur Penllyn, and a *Cywydd i'r Byd ac i Henaint*, which is a skilful production. In the first he gives expression to his belief in Purgatory :

Dwg lor o le di gerydd  
F'enaïd wrth raid yn rhydd ;

and shows old age in its most uninviting aspect :

Crynedig i'm croen ydwyf, | ✓ *dever*  
Crynfa daelen aethnen wyf.

**Tudur Penllyn** was a native of Eifionydd, as he himself states :

Wyf o Ynys Eifionydd—

viz. Ynyscynhaiarn, near Criccieth.

Two of his *cywyddau* have appeared in print—one a satiric reply to Ieuan Brydydd Hir, the general tenor of which is to suggest that Ieuan was jealous of him, because his wealth was increasing :

Goreu dyn ond y gred wan,  
Ar y ddaear oedd Ieuan ;  
Da o'i dda [ac] nid oedd well,  
Drud garedig droed gradell ;  
Ond ni fynai am unawr  
Weled i mi olud mawr.

The other published *cywydd* which is found in the *Brython*, vol. iii. p. 99, was apparently written during the Wars of the Roses, and has references to *Harri*, *Arglwydd Rhismwnt*, which help to fix this bard's date—the latter half of the fifteenth century.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE BARDS OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

#### II

ONE of the most conspicuous bards of this century was **Guto'r Glyn**, a native of Llangollen, who wrote his prolific odes between 1430 and 1460. Williams in his *Eminent Welshmen* refers to him as 'an excellent poet.' He appears to have been the domestic bard to the Abbot of Valle Crucis, although no direct statement to that effect is made in his writings. He was born at Llansantffraid, Glyn Ceiriog (hence his *nom-de-plume* Guto'r *Glyn*), in the neighbourhood of that famous monastery, and several of his poems are addressed to its abbots, Davydd ab Iorwerth and Abbot John. Whether he held an appointment in the abbey, or not, he was in high favour with the monks, and was selected for the delicate task of trying to obtain for the monastery a copy of the *San Greal* as a loan from the Abbot of Neath. His poems show keen observation, and he possesses descriptive powers of no mean order. They are interesting because they reveal much of the inner life of a monastery of that period. The particulars respecting Valle Crucis Abbey are such as cannot be obtained elsewhere. It is described as an open palace with festive board loaded with luxuries. The hospitality of the monks is singled out for a torrent of eulogistic



comment, and their love of books is often dwelt upon. These were not the views of monasticism that prevailed with the bards; and it is interesting to contrast this description by one who knew the life from within, with the adverse criticism of the monks which is so striking a feature in the writings of many of the bards of the period.

Even when making the necessary deductions for adulation, monastic life would appear to have had much to recommend it from the accounts Guto'r Glyn gives of his visits to the abbeys of Waunllwg (Neath), where the copy of the *San Greal* was kept, Marchell, Shrewsbury, and Strata Florida.

His reputation was great, not only amongst the monks, but also with lay patrons, with whom he was always sure of a warm welcome, chief among them being the Herberts of Rhaglan, who valued his genius, and to whom he addressed many of his poems. In one, he welcomes one of the Herberts home from a battle in the Wars of the Roses, where they supported Edward IV. He refers to the 'Bear on the Ragged Staff,' the Warwick standard, in the lines:

Yn rhaid y *baedd* yn rhodio bu  
Yn Lloegr, ninnau'n llewygu.

Amongst his chief *cywyddau* may be mentioned Cywydd i Arglwydd Herbert, Cywydd yn dangos fal y bu ym Maes Mambri, Mawl i Ddafydd ab Dafydd, Cywydd Marwnad i Feurig Fychan o Nannau ac Angharad i wraig, Cywydd i Feredydd ab Ieuan Fychan i ofyn march, Cywydd i Harri Dhu o Euas, and Cywydd ateb i Syr Rhys Drewen, who had written to the bard lamenting that he had not come on his usual round to Iâl:

Gutyn y Glyn y sydd gla  
 Os gweryd ni esgora :  
 Pa ryw gilwyf perigl ofal  
 A'i lluddiodd i wahodd Iâl.

Llewelyn ab Gutyn wrote a *marwnad* to Guto'r Glyn when it was reported he had been drowned at Malltraeth, in which these lines occur :

Tristwch yw Cymry trostyn,  
 Trei a gwlad am Guto'r Glyn ;  
 Boddi wnaeth ar draeth heb drai,  
 Mae'n y nef am na nofiai.

But Guto replies :

Myfyrio mae oferwr  
 Marnad ym ymerw'r dwr,  
 Telynor tal awenydd  
 Trwytho beirdd mewn traethau bydd.

The bardic fiction that *Ysgolan* destroyed a great quantity of Welsh manuscripts in the Tower of London, which Stephens, in his *Literature of the Kymry*, has so ably disproved, has been thought by some to have originated with Guto'r Glyn.

It was to this bard's work also that Iolo Morganwg turned to endeavour to find proof of the genuineness of the ancient British alphabet called 'Coelbren y Beirdd,' and he cites his ode to Dafydd Llwyd in support of it.

Perhaps Guto'r Glyn's finest ode is that written to thank the Abbot of Valle Crucis for a buckler and sword, which were worn at the time more for ornament than use. The poem rises to a sublimer strain than personal flattery, and its tone lends colour to the truth of the tradition that the abbot came upon the bard while he was composing it,

sitting in an arbour in the abbey garden, and asked him what he was doing. 'I am composing an ode in honour of yourself,' replied Guto. 'Oh, then,' said the abbot, 'let it not be in honour of me, but compose one rather to the glory of God.' There are indications that it was composed towards the end of the bard's life, and some lines strike rather a pathetic note :

Mae Adda Fras ym medd fry  
Minnau yn Iâl mynnwn wely ;  
A'm bwcled a'm bywiog-cledd  
Yn arfau maen ar fy medd.

His elegy to the Lady Gwerfyl, the mother of Dafydd Llwyd of Glan Tanad, is full of plaintive sadness.

His poems are a valuable contribution to the social history of Wales in the fifteenth century. The natives of Oswestry considered that he had given such a fine description of their town, that they made him a burgess.<sup>1</sup>

**Dafydd ap Edmwnd** is the next bard to be noticed, and he was the central figure of bardism in the fifteenth century. He probably created the greatest stir in Welsh bardic circles of any known member of that fraternity.

He was a native of Hanmer in Tegeingl, Flintshire, and lived at a place called Pwll Gweppra, and was undoubtedly a man of position and means, as well as of great learning. It has been mentioned that he was a disciple of Meredydd ap Rhys, and it was admitted by the bards of South Wales that he was the ablest bard of Gwynedd.

Rather earlier than the middle of the fifteenth century there was a movement on foot to purify bardism, the originator of which is said to have been Llawdden. He gave strong expression to the views held by many of his

<sup>1</sup> *Bygoner*, September 1875.



chief contemporaries, when he referred to the poetasters who were bringing bardism into disrepute, in such unmeasured terms as the following *englyn* contains :

Pob gair cras, diras, pob dyri—goegwaith  
 Pob gogan a bryntni,  
 Pob drewdod, pob direidi,  
 I gludo wnaed i'n gwlad ni.

Llawdden's great kinsman, Gruffudd ab Nicholas, who was afterwards killed at the battle of Mortimer's Cross, 1461, threw himself heartily into the movement for reform, and on an appeal to the king a commission was granted—Llythyr Cynnwys Harri Sant o Winsor—to hold an Eisteddfod at Carmarthen, the date of which is now generally accepted as 1451, to rearrange the metres. Dafydd ab Edmwnd's undoubted abilities made him a prominent figure at that *eisteddfod*. He had the reputation of being the greatest master of the *awdl* then living, and out of a large number of competitors he was awarded the Chair after a lengthy contest. His most formidable opponent was Gwilym Tew, a bard who had written several poems of the *Hoianau* type, containing predictions. He was a mystic, and may have belonged to that school of bards known as the Cabalists, who pretended to have received many ancient doctrines through tradition.

It has been shown in recent years that, as far as the Welsh bards were concerned, these doctrines were not older than the beginning of the fifteenth century. Professor J. Morris Jones points out that *Cywydd Cyfrinach*, attributed to Rhys Goch Eryri, was their first Cabalistic composition. In it, that bard thanks a certain Llywelyn for teaching him the new doctrines. Gwilym Tew, in high dudgeon that his system of metres was not adopted at



Carmarthen, set up a school of his own in Glamorgan, which ultimately formed itself into *Gorsedd y Beirdd*; and his followers took up the Cabalistic doctrines which Gwilym Tew affected, and pretended to great antiquity, asserting themselves to be the real successors of the Druids. Their first grievance against the rest of the bards had relation to the metres. They urged that Dafydd ap Edmwnd had departed from ancient usage, and arrogated to themselves the superior claim that they were the followers of the old bards. For this reason they adopted the name *Gorsedd Beirdd Ynys Prydain*, in imitation of the ancient bards. Not content with this, they evolved in process of time an arrangement of metres of their own, a system which was completed in 1681, and adopted at Bewpyr in that year. No one outside Morganwg knew much of this system until Iolo Morganwg's son published *Cyfrinach Beirdd Ynys Prydain* in 1829.

The difference between the system of metres known as Dafydd ab Edmwnd's, and that of Morganwg, is that the former consists of twenty-four *stanzas*, and the latter of twenty-four *kinds* of stanza. The old system (which it is wrongly said Dafydd ab Edmwnd departed from) which was in force long before his time, and is given in detail in the *Red Book of Hergest*, consisted also of twenty-four stanzas, and *not* of twenty-four *kinds* of stanza. The only difference between them and those of Dafydd ab Edmwnd, consists in his rejection of an old metre and the substitution of a new one of his own, with a slight modification of two or three others. In the main they are identical, and no new name was given to a single metre, except to that which he himself had invented.

The following are the names of the metres as given in the *Red Book of Hergest*, and it will be easy to compare

them with those in any more recent *awdlau*—for instance, those of William Llŷn or Goronwy Owain :

*Englynion :*

Unodl union, Unodl grwcca, Englyn kyrch, Lleddf Broest,  
Proest talgron, Proest gadwynog, Englyn o'r hen  
ganiad (two are described thus).

*Odieu :*

Toddaid, Gwawdodyn byr, Cyhydedd hir, Cyhydedd fer,  
Hupynt byr, Hir a Thoddaid, Gwawdodyn hir, Cy-  
hydedd naw ban, Clogyrnach, Byr a Thoddaid, Cyrch  
a Chwttā, Tawddgyrch cadwynog.

*Cywyddau :*

Deuair hirion, Deuair fyrion, Awdl gywydd, Cywydd  
llogyrnog.

Dafydd ab Edmwnd's share in altering the *mesurau cerdd dafod* was therefore much less drastic than the Glamorgan bards maintained. He only improved the *hupynt* and the *cadwyn fyr*, and introduced the new metre called *gorchest y beirdd*.

Llawdden, who was best acquainted with the *gwybodaau* of the bards, was deputed by Gruffudd ap Nicolas to arrange the rules (*defodau*) of the bards and minstrels. He did so, obtaining his information from the old records, and incorporated them in a work called *Ystadyd Llawdden*.

Dafydd ab Edmwnd's place amongst the bards was well stated in the *marwnad* written by his nephew, Tudur Aled :

Ni bu fyw neb fwy i Awen  
Ond da fardd Glan Teifi wenn,  
Mab Gwilym heb gywely,  
Heb iddo frawd ni bydd fry.

Tudur Aled, his sister's son, was also a disciple, and so was Gutyn Owain who accompanied him to the Eisteddfod at Carmarthen.

There are eight of Dafydd ab Edmwnd's compositions in the *Gorchestion*: two are written to Rhys o Fôn, three are entitled *Cywydd Merch*, in which the bard adopts the curious device of beginning every line in the same poem with the same letter, and one relates of a maiden who lost her speech when the bard addressed her, and he bewails it thus:

Y ddyn fwyn oedd ddoe'n f'anerch,  
Aeth yn fud weithian y ferch;  
A minau heb law meinwen,  
Ar y ffordd heb air o'i phen.  
Udo'r wyf, mor fud yr aeth,  
Am y dyn o'i mudaniaeth;  
Collais o'i phen bob cellwair,  
Canwn gerdd pe cawn un gair;  
Gwynedd ni phair i'm genau  
Ganu dim os Gwen a dau.  
Nos da iwch ferch, nis dichon,  
Nos da i ti nis dywaid hon.

*Awdl y Meddiant* is a poem showing exceptional skill in the handling of the metres, and *Cywydd i Wallt Merch* is a pretty love-poem in praise of a golden-haired maiden.

**Gutyn Owain**, the historian and herald of the abbeys of Basingworth and Ystrad Fflur, in which he seems to have resided alternately, very much resembles Guto'r Glyn in his bardic efforts as well as in his vocation, and the themes of many of their poems are identical. Thirty of his compositions are found in a folio MS. in the British Museum, and the dates affixed show that none of them were written after 1488. Six were addressed to the Abbot David of Valle Crucis, and seven to his successor, Abbot John. In one of them he requests the loan of a horse, and a spirited description of the animal is given. These requests were often mere fancies, but served to furnish the



bard with a theme. In such poems he generally eulogised his patron before proceeding to ask for the desired favour, and then portrayed the gift with all the descriptive powers at his command. It was a useful exercise in displaying his mastery of the *cynganedd*.

Gutyn Owain is one of the narrators of that nebulous myth, the Madogian discovery of America. More valuable to us are his poems on Valle Crucis Abbey, wherein he describes the richness and beauty of its architecture, and the life led by the monks, whom he shows to be pious and generous men. The Abbot David is said to have added considerably to the building.

This bard sat on the commission appointed by Henry VII. to examine his pedigree, a task for which his close acquaintance with old Welsh MSS. admirably fitted him. He copied the *Brut* of Caradoc, and brought it down to his own time. This book is known as *Llyfr Du Bassing*.

He was a disciple of Dafydd ab Edmwnd, and the *Gorchestion* contains fifteen of his poems, in which he seems to succeed best as a *marwnadwr*.

In the *Heraldic Visitations of Wales* he is thus described: 'Guttyn Owen, Poet Lawrel, of Maelor hath written concerning the three provinces, and his books be very faire.'

**Ieuan Deulwyn** flourished from 1460 to 1490, and was a native of Pendeulwyn in the parish of Cydweli. He calls himself 'bardd o Gaerfyrddin.' When the split took place in the bardic ranks after the Eisteddfod of Carmarthen, he threw in his lot with the bards of Morganwg, and was their president in 1480. Tudur Aled ranks him high amongst the bards, putting him in the same category as Dafydd Nanmor and Dafydd ab Edmwnd:



Bwrw Dafydd gelfydd dann gôr,  
 Bwrw ddoe'n un meistr, bardd Nanmor  
 Bwrw Deulwyn y brawd olaf,  
 Blodau Cerdd, ba wlad y caf ?  
 Tair Awen oedd i'r Triwyr,  
 A fai les i fil o wŷr.

The seven selected poems which appear in the *Myvyrian* show much taste and refinement, especially *Cywydd y Fedwen*, from which the following lines are taken :

Mae yno ym Mai enwog,  
 Allorau gwyrdd a lle'r gôg ;  
 A lle teg i orlliw ton,  
 Lletyau i'w llateion.  
 A gorsedd o gowirserch  
 A rhôl a sut, rholau serch :  
 Ac i'r ddyn o gaerau'r ddôl  
 Osber adar ysprydol ;  
 A phader serch hoffder sôn,  
 O baderau bedw irion.

Lle rhoed, llawer a'i hoedaf,  
 Friallu teg, afrllad haf ;  
 Meillion teg, mae llonaid twyn  
 Mân serliw mynwes irlwyn.  
 Y fedwen ydyw fadail  
 Wybren deg o bren a dail :  
 Teml yr haf, tŷ aml y rhyw,  
 Tŷ o goedwig teg ydyw.

**Lewis Glyn Cothi**, who is sometimes known as Lewis y Glyn or Llywelyn Glyn Cothi, is a bard of exceptional importance in this century, because his poems throw considerable light upon the social and political events of the time, especially the trying period covering the Wars of the Roses.

He is said to have belonged to the Dolau Cothi family,

and his own home was Pwlltynhyd, in Cwm Cothi. No details are known of his early life, but he had certainly developed into a writer of verses by 1450, for one of his poems recounts an incident which happened in that year, when the whole of France, with the exception of Calais, threw off the English yoke. At the battle of Fournigni, where the English were routed, Matthew Goch, a noted Welshman, who was in dire peril of his life, was saved by the promptness and valour of a soldier named Gwilym Gwent, whom the bard refers to thus :

Y vo gedwis i vywyd  
 I Vathew Goch fyth i gyd ;  
 Yno ill dau ni neillduynt  
 I roi y gâd i wŷr gynt.

He saw the end of the Wars of the Roses, and Henry VII. placed upon the throne, for he wrote a congratulatory ode to that monarch ; therefore the period 1440-1490, which is generally assigned to him, is well within the mark.

Socially he must have been a person of some distinction, for he was a military official under Jasper, Earl of Pembroke, and on intimate terms with such men as Rheinallt ap Gruffudd, Y Tŵr, who took up his quarrel against the men of Chester, which arose because the bard had married a widow from that city, without the consent of the citizens, who had a local law forbidding marriages with Welshmen. They took away his wife and wrecked his belongings, so the bitterness expressed against *gwŷr Caerlleon* in some of his poems is matter of small wonder. In one poem he begs a sword from Dafydd ab Gutyn of Oswestry, that he may wreak vengeance upon the men of Chester. From that place he fled to Flint, but had a very

poor reception there, and he gave utterance to his disappointment in the satiric *Cywydd Duchan i Saeson Fflint*. He had meant to write a poem in their praise, but they mocked his efforts, as the following lines state :

Dechreuais, ffyrstiais yn ffraeth,  
Ganu awdl i'r genhedlaeth :—  
Gwatwaru, llysu vy llais,  
Govid yno a gevais.

He then sought refuge in Llwydiarth, near Llanerchymedd, in Môn, and his poems describe his abject plight at this time. But he was received with kindness, and his stay there is marked by the poems 'Cywydd i ofyn hilyn gwely i Elen ferch Llywelyn o Lwydiarth,' 'Marwnad Dafydd ab Gwilym o Lwydiarth,' 'Mawl Huw Lewis o Brysaddfed,' and 'Marwnad Sioned Bwlclai.'

Most of his poems are very vigorous, and are of great interest to antiquarians and historians because of the flood of light they throw upon the leading Welsh families of the time, and the effect of the Wars of the Roses upon the country. Prosperity, wealth, and comfort seem to have prevailed before the outbreak of this civil strife ; but here, as in England, it led to the sacrifice of the best blood of the nation, and in its train brought havoc and ruin to many of the best homes.

His poems follow Henry Tudor from the obscurity of Penmynydd to the open light of a throne. He also follows the careers of Edmund, Jasper, and Owen Tudor, and the results of the battles of Mortimer's Cross, Banbury, and Bosworth. He passes under review the leading nobles of the time and their achievements, and was particularly devoted to the house of Gam and all its offshoots. His genealogies are endless, and, except from an historical standpoint, tend to monotony.

He describes the landing of Edward iv. and his meeting with one of the Welsh nobles thus :

Edward ban ddaeth i'w adwedd,  
Drwy y môr, i dir y medd ;  
Llew Rhys wrth roi llawer rhodd,  
I dri ban a'i derbyniodd ;  
Ac ar dasg y gwnaeth basgwaith,  
Ym mron dydd y murniad waith :  
Ac yn Newksbri dodi dydd  
A'i ynnill ev a'i onwydd.

The manners and customs of the country are well described in other poems ; gambling with dice seems to have been a popular indoor amusement, and throwing the bar the favourite outdoor pastime. The age was not favourable to industries, but in one poem the bard mentions the lead furnaces of Flint. Race antipathy sometimes came to a head in garrison towns, in conflict between the soldiers and the inhabitants. But Lewis Glyn Cothi saw the ties between the two countries cemented when a Tudor was placed upon the throne. He describes the eager anxiety with which the coming of the Earl of Richmond was awaited, in the lines :

Pa vôr y mae d'angorau ?  
Pa bwnt lle'r wyt hwnt, wr tau ?  
Pa bryd, pa hyd y'n hoedir ?  
Y tarw du y troi i dir ?  
Gwyl Vair, gwylia o voroedd,  
Gwynedd wen dan ganu 'dd oedd.  
Mis Mai, di vai yw dy vodd,  
Od wyt draw, y doit drwodd :  
Duw ! Awst gwedi i estyn,  
Y doit : ti a oedit hyn :  
O rôd i rôd ple'r ydwyt ?  
Sori ddyn ! aros ydd wyt ?



And Henry's success he hails with unbounded delight :

Duw dodes *fortun*, do ; doded hirhoedl

I'r *King* Harri seithved ;

Da y gŵyr wedi gwared

Dynu'r groes a'i dwyn i'r Gred.

## CHAPTER X

### THE SIXTEENTH-CENTURY BARDS

#### I

THE chief event in bardism in the sixteenth century was the meeting of the famous Eisteddfod at Caerwys in 1568. There are, however, four bards of some importance whose works must be noticed before that event is treated of. Two of them partly belong to the last century, but many of their best poems were composed in the early part of this.

**Gruffudd ab Ieuan ab Llywelyn Fychan** wrote a few graceful and artistic love-poems which deserve to be better known than they are, as the following lines testify :

Dydd da fo i'r fwyna fu,  
Dig i wŷr yw dy garu.  
Dy gussan bychan oedd ber,  
Dy gael yw dig i lawer.  
Tegwch ail Tegau wych wyd,  
Teg yngwlad Tegaingl ydwyd.  
Nid un lliw yn dwyn llewych,  
Yr un a thi yr eneth wych.  
Ffriw uchel lle ir el lliw'r ôd,  
Ffortunus i phryd hynod.  
Wyth fil, wen, a'th foliannan,  
O'r iâd i lawr ir wyd lân.  
Ni rodia dyn ar dy du  
Ond a geir yn dy garu

Doeth iawn a da i'th luniwyd,  
Dy liw a gannodd Duw lwyd.

Y fun bach a fynn i bod  
Ar un rhyw gwedd arianrhod.

Pan welais gresynais i,  
Pured oedd y pryd eiddi ;  
Ni aned yn nwy Wynedd  
Oll i gyd un well i gwedd.

One of his best poems is his *Marwnad Tudur Aled*. In it he refers to that bard's vocation. He belonged to the Franciscan Order of the Grey Friars :

Ymroi i Dduw a Mair ydd oedd  
Wedi'r sidan drwsiadoedd ;  
I Ddofydd yr addefwyd,  
I ddewis glôg oedd wisg lwyd ;  
Cryf oedd o serch crefydd saint,  
Crefyddfrawd câr ufuddfaint.  
Ffydd y saint hoff oedd i swydd,  
Ffransis a hoffei'r unswydd.

Och dorri braich draw a bron  
Angel anwyl englynion,  
Bowiog englyn heb gonglau,  
Berw gan fryd brig awen frau.

Eilio'r iaith fal Iolo'r oedd,  
Eiliad owdl Aled ydoedd ;  
Awen ddofn o'r un ddefnydd  
A'r gawod fêl ar goed fydd.  
Ymarn y byd marw ni bydd  
Ail Dudur Aled wowdydd ;  
Athrylith aeth ar elawr,  
A therm oes i'r athro mawr.

In the *Cywydd yn erbyn braint delwau* he shows strong leanings towards the Reformation spirit, as the following lines bear witness :

Llyma'r dallter arferwyd,  
 Delwau oedd well no Duw lwyd.  
 Rhoi urddoliant ar ddeulin,  
 A ddylai Grist i ddelw grin.  
 Ffyniant Gwenffrewi ffynon,  
 Ffiaidd a hyll fu'r ffydd hon.  
 Gwelwn cymerwn gwilydd  
 Mor ffol yr aethom o'r ffydd.  
 Ffydd dduwiol y postolion,  
 Hoffai Dduw hael y ffydd hon.  
 Trown ninnau i gyd byd bedydd,  
 O ran a pharch i'r un ffydd,  
 A rhown heibio, tro trymddig,  
 Ganhwyllau a delwau dig.

One of the quaintest of his odes is that entitled, *Gweddi ar Gynhafal rhag gwaew mewn clun*, which shows that although the bard had cast off what he regarded as superstitions in one direction, he clung to them firmly in another. This is how he describes his pain :

Cainc o nych acw yn y knawd,  
 Kyn f'elor yn knoi f'aelawd.

Then he beseeches St. Cynhafal to remove it :

D'wrthieu draw diwarth a drig,  
 Dy ras a dyr waew ysig.  
 Addef it y weddi fau  
 A yr gwewyr o'r giau.

Gwan adyn gan waew ydwyf,  
 Gweddiwr it gweiddi'r wyf.



The result is not stated in the poem itself, but it is subscribed thus: 'Gruffudd ab Ieuan ap Llewelyn Vychan a'i gwnaeth ag ai kanodd yngwydd y plwy ag aeth yn iach.'

**Tudur Aled** was a very prominent bard, and by vocation a Franciscan monk, as Gruffudd ab Ieuan states in the lines just quoted. Tudur Aled himself in a well-known *englyn*, composed when he was received into that fraternity, sings:

Brawd i Sant Ffransis, na bo brych—f'wyneb,  
Pan fyner i edrych;  
Yn i grefydd yn gryfwych,  
Yn i wisg wyf yn was gwyh.

He was a nephew of Dafydd ab Edmwnd, by whom he was taught the bardic lore, and of whom he writes:

F'ewythr o waed, f'athraw oedd,  
Fynwes gwawd, fy nysg ydoedd.

The exact dates of his birth and death are not known, but he was not present at the Carmarthen Eisteddfod in 1451, where his uncle played so prominent a part, and he was still living when the first Eisteddfod of Caerwys was held in 1524; or, as Gruffudd Hiraethog states in one of his *englynion*, 1525:

Mil pum cant, rhifant y rhed,—a rhagor  
Pump ar hugain, rhodded  
Yn ddeddf bwys beirdd Gaerwys ged,  
Rheolau Tudur Aled.

The *rheolau* seem to have effected no changes in Welsh prosody, and are thought to have been nothing more than a confirmation of those adopted at the Carmarthen Eisteddfod through the influence of Llawdden and Dafydd ab Edmwnd.

Tudur Aled's home was at Garth Geri, in the parish of

Llansannan, Denbighshire, and he took his name from the river Aled which flows through that charming vale. He was a strong supporter of the Lancastrian cause, and a follower of Rhys ap Thomas of Dinevor, to whom he wrote several poems. He had a most prolific muse, and wrote many eulogies to the Salusburys of Llyweni, and also to the monks and clergy, as was natural. Amongst the latter may be mentioned *Awdl Foliant Sion Abad Caerlleon*, *Cywydd i ofyn march i Abad Aberconwy*, and *Cywydd Moliant Ffowk Salbri, Deon Llanelwy*. His *cywydd* to Gwenffrewi (St. Winifred) gives a description of the miracles wrought at St. Winifred's well, and a recital of some of the legends that had clustered round that saint's name.

His excellent knowledge of Welsh prosody constitutes him one of the most reliable of the bards for quotation in works dealing with the laws of verse, and most of the Welsh Grammars, which became numerous a little later, found in his poems apt illustrations both in language and versification. He was the bardic teacher of Gruffudd Hiraethog, and on this account his influence was undoubtedly great upon the bards of this century, for many of the foremost of them were the latter's disciples. At the first Eisteddfod of Caerwys he graduated as *pencerdd*. The account taken from *Llyfr y Plâs Gwyn* and copied in the *Greal* states—'Tudyr Aled a ganiadwyd ac a gyvrymied yn athraw cadeiriawg, i arwain riandlws.'

But it was as a writer of *marwnadau* that Tudur Aled excelled, and out of the nine poems selected from his works in the *Gorchestion*, six are elegies, the best known being that to Dafydd ap Edmwnd. The majesty and strength of its opening couplet immediately arrests the attention :

Llaw Dduw a fu'n lladd awen,  
Lladd enaid holl ddwned hen.

It breathes a sense of personal bereavement as well as that of a loss to the bardic fraternity, as the following lines show :

Cell a dadl colled ydoedd,  
Cyfryw ddyn cyfarwydd oedd ;  
Canu oedd well cyn ei ddwyn,  
Clymu gwawd cwlwm y gadwyn :  
Canu fyth y cawn y fo,  
Ac iawn oedd canu iddo.  
Gwae fi, unig f'awenydd,  
O aros awr er y sydd !  
F'ewythr o waed, f'athraw oedd,  
Fynwes gwawd, fy nysg ydoedd ;  
Mae siom o'i eisiau yma,  
Methu'r dysg am athro da ;  
Mi a gollais fmgellwair,  
A thrach gefn, dieithrwrch gair.  
Dafydd a wnaï'r gerdd dafawd,  
Dyrnod gwn drwy enaid gwawd !  
Dwyn diben dewin deubeth,  
Da fu i air, nid ai feth.

Then he compares him with Dafydd ab Gwilym :

Ni bu fyw neb fwy i awen,  
Ond da fardd Glan Teifi wen ;  
Mab Gwilym heb gywely,  
Heb iddo frawd, ni bydd fry.

**Gruffudd Hiraethog** (?—c. 1566) forms a link between Tudur Aled and the bards of the second Eisteddfod of Caerwys. He is better known as the teacher of many bards than by his own poems, very few of which have been published, although the first lines of sixty-four of them are given on the cover of the *Greal*.

He was a native of Llansannan in Denbighshire, but spent the latter part of his life at Llangollen, where he was

also buried, in the chancel of the parish church, as William Llŷn testifies in a *Cywydd Marwnad* he composed to him :

A'r pwyll, a'r synwyr o'r pen,  
A'r cellwair ynghôr Collen.

According to Harl. MS. 2299, he married Catherine, a descendant in an indirect line of Owain Glyndwr.

The year of his death is unknown, but he was not present at either of the Eisteddfodau at Caerwys, from which it can be concluded that he flourished between 1530 and 1566.

He had a dispute with Sion Brwynog, and they exchanged a few *cywyddau*, in one of which the latter refers to him as a cripple. This was probably what William Llŷn meant when he addressed the dead bard as—

Y Bardd *bach*, uwch beirdd y byd!

In a poem published in the *Cambro-Briton*, Hiraethog describes one of his bardic tours, and his visit to Moeliwrch House, to which he refers thus :

Tynnu'r wyf tan arafhynt,  
Treiglo lle bu'r Guto gynt ;  
Pawb yno, pob awenydd  
Yno cân bawb, canu bydd.  
Yno gwau cerdd, nid gwiw cêl,  
Tewach n'ar Guto i Hywel,  
Llew iawn yn cadw llawenydd  
Llan Silin, Morus Wynn sydd.

Only one of his poems is given in *Gorchestion Beirdd Cymru*, an elegy to Gruffudd ap Robert Fychan of Abercyn, near Criccieth. It contains no striking imagery, and is a composition of average merit, as may be judged from these lines :



Gwae fi ! ple y gweuaf fawl ?  
 Ddaearu Gruffydd wrawl !  
 Di olud wyf hyd elawr,  
 Daeth i'm oes dau adwyth mawr  
 Un fu i ddwyn, i nef ydd aeth,  
 Ei aer gwrol ragoriaeth ;  
 Heddyw'r ail, hawdd yr wylwn,  
 Hydd hael, am ddyhuddo hwn.

Ar ol eryr aur luryg,  
 Wyled ei blant, lu di blyg

Wylaw ar dasg lawer dydd  
 Wna finau yn Yfionydd.

Gwae ni bawb gau yn y bedd  
 Gwir gu enaid gwŷr Gwynedd.

**Sion Brwynog** was a poet and historian of this period of whom very little is known. He was a native of Anglesey and owner of an old mansion called *Brwynog*, near *Llanddeusant*, in that county. Apart from the dispute he had with *Gruffudd Hiraethog*, the best impression of his ability as a bard is that gleaned from *William Llŷn's marwnad* to him, in which he is highly extolled for his learning and skill. He is thus described :

Da i Gymraec di gymar oedd,  
 Didlawd ymhob dadl ydoedd ;  
 Da i awen aeth Duw yw nol,  
 Da i ddysc val diwedd ysgol ;  
 Di frwd a difyr ydoedd,  
 A brwd iawn o bai raid oedd.  
 Astidiwr issod ydoedd,  
 Ysgwir y dysc erioed oedd.  
 Prydai i ferch parod i fawl,  
 Prydydd y gawd priodawl ;  
 Parod vyth y prydai vo,  
 Pryd sedd pyradwys iddo.

To one of the two poems he wrote to Gruffudd Hiraethog, the date 1550 is affixed; and as he is not mentioned at Caerwys, he probably died before 1567. The cause of the dispute between the two bards was that Gruffudd, in his praise of Tegaingl, took occasion to attack Ifan Gôch, an Anglesey bard, who had been some time dead, and was a kinsman of Sion Brwynog. The latter in warm resentment contrasted the beauties of Môn with those of Tegaingl, and defended Ifan Gôch in an excellent poem in which these lines occur :

Llawer o wir oll ar wawd  
 A wnaeth Ifan a thafawd ;  
 Prydydd a fu, prydodd fawl,  
 Prydyddfawr gŵr pur ddeddfawl ;  
 Parod awen pur diwael,  
 Pla bu hwn i bobl hael ;  
 Ac ni wnae chwaith, lanwaith lên,  
 I Degengl erioed ogen ;  
 Ei eiriau mwys ar y mawl,  
 A wnae gariad angwriawl ;  
 [A] Gruffydd fawr o ffydd wan,  
 Arwydd achos ar dduchan ;  
 Dewr yw'r gŵr a dieiriach,  
 Dewr o bell mal y Driw bach.

**Caerwys Eisteddfod, 1567.**—Just as it had been felt in the middle of the fifteenth century that something must be done to put a check upon ignorant and indolent poetasters and minstrels who were nothing more than professional beggars who tramped the country, and not only extorted money from the unwary, but annoyed the gentry and those who were capable of judging their incapacity, so *now*, in the middle of the sixteenth century, it was found necessary to make a renewed effort to put down these

impostors, who sullied the fair fame of bardism and were in danger of bringing it into contempt.

The bards who took their profession seriously succeeded in 1566 in getting from Queen Elizabeth permission to hold an Eisteddfod, the object of which was to license bards, and to prevent those unable to compose in the regular metres from professing poetry. The commission was entrusted by the Queen to the following gentlemen: Sir Richard Bulkeley, Knt.; Sir Rhys Gruffydd, Knt.; Ellis Prys, Esq., D.C.L., and one of the Council of the Marches; William Mostyn, Ieuan Llwyd of Iâl, John Salisbury of Rûg, Rhys Thomas, Morus Wynn, William Lewis, Prys Mostyn, Owain Sion ap Howel Fychan, Sion William ap Sion, Sion Lewis Owain, Morus Gruffydd, Simwnt Thelwal, Elis ap William Llwyd, Robert Pulestone, Harri ap Harri, William Glyn, and Rhys Huws, Esquires.

After allowing time for the usual notice of at least a year and a day, the Eisteddfod was held at Caerwys on May 26, 1567.

The test imposed upon the bards was to write correct *cynganedd* and to display a mastery of the twenty-four metres. This test was quite sufficient to make the bards an exclusive body, for the uneducated would never be able to cope with it. Four bardic degrees were obtainable—*Pencerdd*, *Disgybl Pencerdddaidd*, *Disgybl Disgyblaidd*, and *Disgybl Yspâs*; musical degrees were also granted for proficiency on the harp and the *crwth*.

It is proposed to notice first the four bards who obtained the highest degree in *cerdd dafod* (poetry), viz. Lewis Edward, William Llŷn, Owain Gwynedd, and Simwnt Fychan.

(1) **Lewis Edward**, or Lewis Môn, is unknown by any of his published poems.

(2) **William Llŷn** (1535-1580) was one of the greatest bards of the sixteenth century. Little is known of his early days, but he spent the last twenty years of his life (1560-1580) at Oswestry. There is definite evidence of his death in the latter year, for in the Parish Church Register it is stated that he died on the last day of August, 1580; and in a *marwnad* composed to him by Rhys Cain, that bard states that he was forty-six years old at the time of his death. It is generally thought that he was a clergyman, and more especially as he himself affirms:

I garu y gwr gwiwrym,  
*Urdde Duw* a roddwyd ym.

Some of the transactions mentioned in his will, however, are very unsettling on this point, and it is difficult to decide definitely.

He was one of the disciples of Gruffudd Hiraethog, who had formed a high opinion of his bardic qualities; his verdict is well known—*Nid oes dim yn anwybodus i Wiliam Llŷn*. He was certainly one of the greatest masters of *cynghanedd* who wrote between Dafydd ab Gwilym and Goronwy Owain. In a single couplet he often succeeds in bringing before the mind a clear and well-defined picture, e.g.

Arf wyt ar fywyd dewrion,  
 Ac eli teg y wlad honn.  
 Y mae'n wann edn bychan byrr,  
 Heb plu fawr mewn palf eryr.  
 A llwyn gwyrda llen gwardeg  
 Yn teimlo Duw mewn teml deg.

He wrote upon no new themes, but he has a distinct poetic individuality in revealing the old themes in new aspects. Like most of the bards, he censures covetousness



and pride, but he does so more often by drawing a striking contrast between them and their opposite virtues than by attacking them directly. The following lines in praise of hospitality are a fair sample of the quality of his *cywyddau* :

Mwy noc i ffair, medd gair gwan,  
Oedd o lwybre i Ddolobrann,  
A ffyrth heb glo na fforthor,  
A gras Duw ymhob gris a dôr,  
A chynnal beirdd ychwanec,  
A chanu ymysc teulu tec.

Ac yno mae digoniant,  
Ac aur, a gwin, a gwŷr gant,  
A gŵr mawr a gâr roi medd,  
A gwraic orau orr gwragedd.

Da kynn gwyl wyt deucan gwaith,  
A da'r wyl wyd yr eilwaith,  
I rannu da yr un dôn  
Wedi gwyl yw dy galon.

Many of his lines contain admirable moral precepts, of which the following are good examples :

Llid sydd flin medd doethineb,  
Llid ni all wellâd i neb.

Byw'n gymwys heb hen gamau  
A bar i hil dyn barhau.

Trugarhewch trwy garu hedd,  
Tra gwrol yw trugaredd.

Y gwr a haeddo i garu,  
Wellwell vydd val lowydd llu.

His love poetry is sometimes of much excellence, especially in descriptive passages. He describes a maiden's beauty in the following fine lines :

Gwyn yw'r haul gwanwr heli,  
Gwen awch ton gwynach wyt ti ;  
Gwen yw gaenen ar y gweunydd,  
Gwnach yw graen gwen ych grudd.

But his best poems are those on more weighty themes ; the problems that chiefly engross him are the brevity of human life, and its relation to, and dependence upon, higher powers. Of its brevity he writes :

Ffol yw'r oes arr ffael a red,  
Ffei orr einioes i ffrined !

Ni ffery dyn hoff araul,  
Mwy no rrew ymin yr haul.

Doe yn wych yn dwyn iechyd,  
A heddyw'r pridd arr y pryd.

But he acknowledges a controlling power and a beneficent purpose in what seems so inexplicable :

Och i'r adwyth na chredwn,  
I fwriad da fyrred hwn.

Y byd hwnn a'r bywyd tec  
Yw yr hudol yn rredec,  
I fewn golau fo'n gelwir  
O'r hudol hwn i'r hoedl hir.

A very considerable number of his compositions are *marwnadau*, and it is in this kind of poem that he excels. His quick sympathy and rather melancholy temperament

were well adapted to it. Here is a picture he gives of the intense grief caused by the ravages of death :

Oer oedd weled ar ddeulin  
Wylo gwaed lle bu alw gwin,  
A braw lle bu orawen,  
A gwaedd yn amlach na gwen.

Wylo a wnewch hyd eiloes,  
Er hynn ni chair yn ych oes  
Pe rhoe Dduw pur weddiwr  
Ar law dyn er wylo dwr,  
Wylem waed ar Wiliam maeth  
Er i weled yr eilwaith.

Some of his finest lines are those in which he gives expression to a thought which seemed to afford him much consolation : that death was no respecter of persons, but that *all*, man and nature, must succumb to it. In his fine *marwnad* to his old master, Gruffudd Hiraethog, he expresses it thus :

Eryr gwyllt ar war gelltydd  
Nid ymgel pan ddel i ddydd,  
A'r pysg a fo mysg y môr  
A ddwg angau'n ddigyngor,  
Y byd oll be deallwn,  
Ar y sydd a erys hwn ;  
Aristotlus foddus fu  
Ar ddysg oll, urddas gallu,  
Tydain ail tad awen oedd,  
Taliesin teulu oesoedd,  
( Pob un oedd aeth pawb yn wâr  
Ar i ddiwedd i'r ddaear.

Some of his other best-written elegies are those to Sir Owain ab Gwilym, curate of Tal-y-llyn ; to the bard Sion

Brwynog, which has been already mentioned; to Howel Fychan; to William, Earl of Pembroke, in 1570; to Simwnt Thelwal, one of the Commissioners at Caerwys; to Sion Llwyd of Iâl; to Sir John Salusbury of Lleweni; and to Thomas Mostyn.

(3) **Owain Gwynedd**, or Owain Ifan, was the domestic bard of Lewis Owen, Baron of the Exchequer for North Wales, who met with such a tragic end at the hands of the *Gwylliaid Cochion* of Mawddwy, a notorious band of highwaymen who were a great terror to travellers on the main road between Machynlleth and Welshpool. They had their hiding-place in *Dugoed Mawr*, about half-way between the two towns, and the Baron, in the course of his judicial duties, had sentenced some of their number to death. They determined to waylay him at the first opportunity, and succeeded in their evil designs the next time he passed their haunts, by erecting a barricade at a bend of the road, which is still called *Llidiart y Barwn*. Owain Gwynedd composed an elegy upon his murdered patron, and this, together with his bardic quarrel with William Llŷn, in which several *cywyddau* passed between the two bards, is nearly all that is known of the third *pencerdd* of Caerwys. That quarrel arose out of William Llŷn's visit to *Caer Gai*, the residence of Owain ap Sion, who invited him to spend a considerable time there. This lengthy stay was resented by Owain Gwynedd as an intrusion upon his own preserves, and he looked upon William Llŷn as having ousted him from favour there. He conducted the controversy in a very acrimonious spirit, as the following couplets show:

Aed Wiliam i Gydwelli  
Ymhell i Gwent o'm lle i.



Mab yw Wiliam a balai  
O gyrrau Gwent i Gaer Gai.

Drwg yw o fardd drwg i foes,  
Dirwyno Duw yr einioes.

William Llŷn replied with equal warmth, but can hardly be said to have had the better of the contest, although Owain Gwynedd had the grace to admit his excellence as a bard, in the lines :

Da yw i gerdd a di gam,  
A dilesg ydiw Wilyam ;  
Dyn yw ir vrau dôn aur frig,  
Dewis gwawdydd dysgedig.

There is only one *cywydd* of this bard's in *Gorchestion y Beirdd*, entitled *Cywydd Gorchestol i Sion Lewis Owain*.

(4) **Simwnt Fychan** (1546-1606) was that disciple of Gruffudd Hiraethog's whose work his master summed up as *gofalus*. It was an accurate estimate, for his work was that of a good organiser rather than a great bard. His poems are more noted for their accuracy of form than for their wealth of sentiment.

He was born in 1546, and was a gentleman of means, living at Tŷ Brith, Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd.

His best-known bardic contribution was that shown before the Caerwys Eisteddfod, entitled *Awdl i arddangos y pedwar mesur ar hugain i'r Meistr Pirs Mostyn o Dal-acre*. It is a masterpiece in *cynganedd*, and not devoid of ideas. It was published fully in *Gramadeg Lladin Sion Dafydd Rhys*, and in *Gramadeg Cymraeg Sion Rhydderch*.

Simwnt Fychan is also known as the author of a Grammar, and he is the predecessor of a long list of grammarians in this period. His book is entitled *Gramadeg*

*Simwnt Fychan o'r Tŷ Brith*, 1565. Of the Welsh alphabet he says—'Saith lythyren ar hugain ysydd angenrheidiol wrthynt i ysgrifennu yr iaith gamberaig.' These are the same as those contained in our present alphabet.

The following lines are quoted from the bard's *Marwnad Richard Clwch*:

Braw a droes, oer bryder sydd,  
 Briw dwfn fal i bu'r defnydd ;  
 Braw anial, briwo Ynys  
 Brydain a Llundain a'i llys.  
 Aeth yr Iesu a'i thrysor,  
 A gwresdarn o Loegr a'i stôr.  
 Marw ddoe hydd, mae'r waedd heddyw,  
 Mastr Clwch, holl Westminster a'i chlyw.

Simwnt Fychan died in 1606.

Three of the bards who were *Disgyblion Pencerrddaid* at Caerwys remain to be noticed—William Cynwal, Sion Tudur, and Sion Phylib.

(1) **William Cynwal**.—Gruffudd Hiraethog is reported to have said of this bard, who was his disciple, '*Awenyddol yw Gwilym Cynwal*.' Most of his poems are unpublished, and it is difficult to form a correct estimate of his work on that account. Nineteen of them were written during his controversy with Archdeacon Edmwnd Prys. The greatness of his antagonist threw Cynwal into the shade, and it was an unequal contest from the start. The Archdeacon was noted for his prowess in these conflicts, but it is hard to think that a bard, who was described by so competent a judge as Gruffudd Hiraethog as *awenyddol*, could employ his muse to the best advantage in an acrimonious discussion of this kind. Edmwnd Prys said that Cynwal's odes were marked by all the faults common to *cerdd dafod* when handled by an indifferent bard, but so

many bitter things were said on both sides that it is interesting to have the unbiassed opinion of no less an authority than Goronwy Owen on the merits of both one and the other. He wrote—‘Nid hen ddyn dwl oedd yr Archddiacon, ac ystyried yr amser yr oedd yn byw ynddo; etto yr wyf yn cyfrif Wiliam Cynwal yn well bardd, o ran natur, anian, ac athrylith, ond bod Edmwnt yn rhagori mewn dysg. Nid oedd Cynwal druan (ysgolhaig bol clawdd), ond megis yn ymladd â’r dyrnau moelion yn erbyn tarian a llurig.’

This bard was a native of Penmachno in Carnarvonshire, where he was born, it is said, in 1530.

Three of his poems, which have been published in the *Records of Denbigh*, were written to the Clwch family. Richard Clwch, or Clough, of Bachegraig, was a prominent and wealthy merchant in the reign of Elizabeth. He is supposed to have visited Jerusalem and to have been a Knight of the Holy Sepulchre.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps that is why William Cynwal entitles his elegy ‘Kowydd Marwnad am y Mastr Rhissiart Clwch *marchog o fedd Krist*.’ He died in 1570, as the following lines show :

E vynnodd i’w vyw ennyd,  
Wellau ar bawb oll o’r byd,  
Yn gedyrn hwnn a gododd,  
I bobl rhoe gan *nobl* yn rhodd.  
I’w frodyr doe bu frwydr dydd,  
A chwerw gŵyn i’w chwiorydd.  
Yr oedd deg, hardd diwygiad!  
Yn aeron teg o’r un tad.  
Oed Iesu fu, dewis fodd,  
Di gam pan y degymodd,  
Pymtheg cant, tyfiant ofeg,  
Pum saith ddwywaith, mae’n daith deg.

William Cynwal died about 1600.

<sup>1</sup> *Ancient and Modern Denbigh*, p. 174.

(2) **Sion Tudur** (?—1602) was another disciple of Gruffudd Hiraethog. He is said to have been one of the four Vicars Choral of St. Asaph, but his own testimony is against this, for he wrote :

Curais dri o'r Ficeriaid,  
Pedwerydd pe do'i aros,  
I'w guro awn dan gwr nos.

His name is not included in Browne Willis's *St. Asaph*. A bard named Edward ap Ralph in his *Cywydd Marwnad Sion Tudur* makes him out to have been a soldier, unless he is referring to him in that capacity in another sense :

Mêl ar wawd, *milwr ydoedd*,  
Morda gwyr Meiriadog oedd.

The date of that *cywydd* is 1602. He died on Easter Eve, the 4th of April 1602. Sion Tudur was already a very old man in 1588 when he wrote *Cywydd i Fibl y Dr. Morgan*,<sup>1</sup> in which he says :

Hen fardd a fu hardd fy hynt  
Wyf, a hynaf o honynt.

Tario 'Nghansel Llanelwy,  
Heb allu mynd i bell mwy ;  
A chanlyn gair (iawn air oedd)  
Iesu ; madws i'm ydoedd :  
Darllen yn ffel hyd elawr—  
I bobl ym mwth y Bibl mawr.

These last six lines are decidedly in favour of the opinion that he was in Orders, and if the same rule obtained in cathedrals in those days as at present, he would be one of the dignitaries, and not a Vicar Choral, for the Lessons from

<sup>1</sup> *Y Brython*, iii. p. 433.



Scripture are usually read by the former, and Sion Tudur mentions it as his constant practice.

The above-mentioned *cywydd* is one of the best of his published poems, twelve of which have appeared in the *Brython*, and many short pieces in the *Greal*. His theological attitude is made quite clear in it :

Byr i enaid braw annoeth,  
 Pardwn Pab rhag purdan poeth ;  
 Pan farnai Dduw poen fwrn ddu  
 Pwy yw'r dyn all bardynu ?  
 Gorau pardwn gwn a gaid,  
 Gwaed yr Oen i gadw'r enaid.  
 Llawenydd yn nydd a nos,  
 Llawenychwn llawn achos ;  
 Dwyn gras i bob dyn a gred,  
 Dwyn geiriau Duw'n agored.

Gofyn 'rwy i ddyn oedd dda,  
 Gofyn y Bibl yn gyfa,  
 Dod Gyfraith air maith i mi  
 Praff adail, a'r Prophwydi ;  
 Yr holl gyfraith freisgwaith frau,  
 A'r Efengyl, arf angau.

*Araith Sion Tudur* is a very long poem, published in the *Brython*, vol. v., and is not written in *cynganedd*. It purports to be the history of the bard's life, and shows that he was a master of satire, a vein in which he occasionally indulges in other poems,—for instance, that in which he exposes to ridicule a certain miser, who, although he built a house with nine chimneys, used but one of them. He is bidden to burn a straw man in them, that they may perform their function for once :

Ffei o gyrn cedyrn cauadwaith—heb ros  
 Ac heb wres na'i obaith ;

Ffagla wellt-was, ffugiol waith,  
Gnâf gwan, a gwna fwg unwaith.

*Camb. Briton*, i. p. 271.

There is nothing to prove that William Llŷn was the bardic tutor of Edmwnd Prys, but the latter in one of his poems states that Sion Tudur certainly was. He writes to him—

Athraw ydwyd, a thradoeth,  
A cholofn y gerdd ddofn ddoeth.

Disgybl wyf o dysg gwbl [waith]  
Yspâs hir, yspys araith.

Mesura rymus wryd,  
Moes di'r gwir, *fy meistr*, i gyd.

*Enwogion y Ffydd*, i. p. 67.

This bard also, as well as Simwnt Fychan and William Cynwal, wrote a *marwnad* to Sir Richard Clwch.

(3) **Sion Phylip** (1543-1620). The last of the graduates of Caerwys who shall be noticed is Sion Phylip of Mochras. Eben Fardd, writing to the *Brython*,<sup>1</sup> said that he had discovered a statement in one of the MSS. that this bard was twenty-two when the Caerwys Eisteddfod was held. This is not correct, he was born in 1543; and Edmwnd Prys, one of the many bards who wrote his *cywydd marwnad*, states that he died in 1620. He had a brother, William Phylip, who was also a bard, and the latter in one of his poems, an elegy upon his father, gives their parent's name as Phylip Sion.

Sion Phylip was the *bardd teulu* of Nannau and Cors y Gedol, and was very popular with the bards of his day, as the numerous *marwnadau* composed to him testify. But he had a slight dispute with Sion Tudur, who wrote finding

<sup>1</sup> *Y Brython*, iv. p. 142.

fault with him because he had paid a visit to Bishop Davies of St. Asaph in his absence ; and another with his brother Richard Phylip, because of the latter's visit to Huw, Lord of Nannau.

His *marwnad* to William Llŷn pays very generous tribute to that bard, of whom he sings :

Aeth heibio wawd fyth heb wên,  
Aeth ddoe Duw a thad awen.

Naddiad yn wastad a wnai,  
Awenyddol y naddai.

Naddu'r awdl yn dda'r ydoedd,  
Nadd yscwir yn y ddysc oedd.

Dyfal chwiliodd, nid rhodd drwch,  
Drwy galon pob dirgelwch.

Sion Phylip met his death by drowning, when he was on a bardic circuit in Llein. His son Gruffudd composed the following *englyn* while the dead bard was being rowed across the water to his burial at Llandanwg :

O fwynion ddynion, bob yn ddau—cyfarwydd  
Cyfeiriwch y rhwyfau,  
Tynnwch ar draws y tonnau,  
A'r bardd trist yn i gist gau.

Edmwnd Prys sang of him :

Cafodd oes hir cyfedd sain,  
Agos i bedwar ugain ;  
Ac yno'i dug dig iawn don,  
Angau fud y' nghyfoedion :  
Marw a wnaeth merion ieithoedd,  
Yn Llein megis canwyll oedd ;  
Ar Wyl Fair, arw leferydd,  
A gwirod oer garwa dydd ;

Dau wythgant bwriad ieithgoeth  
A dau ddeg, oed Mab Duw ddoeth.

Yn ifanc gwnai gerdd nwyfus,  
Yn naddu'r iaith yn ddirus ;  
Yn hen, dda awen ddiell,  
Canai i Dduw can oedd well.

He was buried at Llandanwg, where the following epitaph written by Hugh Cynfal was placed above his grave :

Dyma fedd gwrda gu—Sion Phylib,  
Sein a philer Cymru ;  
Cwynwn fynd athro canu  
I garchar y ddaear ddu.

Before reviewing the work of the remaining bards of the sixteenth century, which shall be done in the next chapter, two bards who were not graduates at the famous *eisteddfod* of Caerwys may be noticed here. They were both disciples of William Llŷn—Rhys Cain and Maurice Kyffin.

**Rhys Cain** (?—1614) is said to have been an artist by profession, and there is a story extant that he gave great offence to some extreme Puritans by his picture of the Crucifixion.

The *Greal* mentions many of his poems, but they have not been published, and from what is known of them they are not of much merit. His *marwnad* to William Llŷn is written in the form of a dialogue between the living and the dead, in imitation of that written by the latter to Gruffudd Hiraethog. Amongst the tributes he pays to his great master are these :

Pencerddaf callaf ich caid,  
Pen cerddawr y pencerddiaid.

A wnai y gwawd ni wnai gam,  
Wrth riwl yr athro Wiliam.



He was buried at Oswestry on May 10, 1614, as the Register there states. He therefore survived William Llŷn thirty-four years.

**Maurice Kyffin** will be noticed later, in the chapter on the sixteenth-century prose writers, for his contributions to Welsh literature are mostly in that direction. But he himself mentions that William Llŷn was his bardic teacher, in the following *englynion* :

Wiliam llyn feithryn fy athro : Dilis  
Ydolwg heb ango  
Mwya undaith amendio  
Anhardd fai ar fy ngherdd fo.

Prydydd teg wowdydd pur ydych : penkerdd  
Pynkiau kłod urddaswych  
Pyradwysaidd pryd oeswych  
Pura mab mam Wiliam wych.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE SIXTEENTH-CENTURY BARDS

#### II

THIS chapter is to be devoted to those bards who were not graduates at the Eisteddfod of 1567, but who occupy a prominent place in Welsh literature in this century.

The first, and perhaps the greatest of them, is **Edmwnd Prys** (1541-1623). He was the son of John Prys, of Tyddyn Du, Maentwrog, and was born in 1541, as he himself states in his Latin verses which preface Dr. Davies's *Antiquæ Linguae Britannicæ*. He removed to Gerddi Bluog, in the parish of Llanfair, when his son married the heiress of that place.

He was educated at St. John's College, Cambridge, where he graduated in Arts. In 1572 he was appointed to the living of Festiniog, and four years later became Archdeacon of Merioneth. In 1580 he became Vicar of Llanddwywe which he held in plurality, and in 1602 he was appointed to a Canonry at St. Asaph.

He acknowledged Sion Tudur as his bardic teacher, and confessed to an acquaintance with eight languages, but in spite of that admitted the difficulty of his own :

Ni phrofais dan ffurfafen,  
Gwe mor gaeth a'r Gymraeg wen.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Preface to *Gorchestion Beirdd Cymru*, p. 9.

His great controversy with William Cynwal has already been noticed. It originated in the promise on the part of the latter of a steel bow, to a man named Rhys Wyn, who asked the Archdeacon, who was present, if he would write a *cywydd* to ask for it, in accordance with the frequent custom of the bards. The Archdeacon was willing, and William Cynwal said he agreed to this, on condition that *he* was to name the subject. His long delay in sending it to the Archdeacon was taken to mean that he wanted to relinquish his promise. Edmwnd Prys, at Rhys Wyn's desire, wrote the *cywydd* at last without waiting for the subject to be named. Cynwal replied that he had lent the bow to Mr. Thomas Prys of Plas Iolyn. Two years passed, and the promise was still unfulfilled, and when the Archdeacon met the bard, he reminded him of it. Cynwal sent a *cywydd* and a letter showing his *achau*. Edmwnd Prys replied with the same; and so the controversy dragged on, its net result being the addition of a large number of *cywyddau* to the language—fifty-five, it is said, of which the great majority were written by the Archdeacon, whose scathing sarcasm and merciless criticism are credited with having caused William Cynwal's death.

These *cywyddau ymryson*, however, do not constitute Edmwnd Prys's greatest work. It is his metrical translation of the Psalms that has endeared him to his countrymen. The need for a work of this kind had long been felt, and some had already attempted it. Dafydd Ddu o Hiraddug had translated twenty-six, and William Myddleton had busied himself with the same task, both writing in the *cynganedd* metres. The latter's work was published after his death by Thomas Salisbury in 1603, but it never became popular for the reason that the masses could not follow the *cynganedd*. Maurice Kyffin had thought of

undertaking the work, but death intervened. Edward Kyffin started it, but only finished fifty psalms.

Edmwnd Prys had sufficient intuition to see where the others had failed, and started translating them in the free metres which were understood by all. He finished his great work in 1621, and this, it is believed, was his last literary task. He gives three reasons for not using the twenty-four metres :

(1) Am na allwn ryfygu clymu'r Ysgrythyr Santaidd ar fesur cyn gaethed.

(2) Y mae Gair Duw i'w ganu mewn cynulleidfa santaidd o lawer ynghyd, yr hyn a allant wneuthur ar y mesur gwael hwn, ond ni allant ar *gywydd* neu *awdl*.

(3) Pobl annysgedig a ddysgant bennill o garol lle ni allai ond ysgolhaig ddysgu cywydd neu gerdd gyfarwydd arall.

There are twelve hymn-tunes in his book, one for each of the free metres he has employed. A very striking feature of his psalms is the irregularity of the accent, which some have ascribed to the bard's ignorance. But it is more reasonable to suppose that he did it for the sake of the sense, and for variety.

These psalms contain in every couplet an *awdl gyrch*, i.e. a word in the end of the first line rhyming with a word or syllable in or about the middle of the second, e.g.

Am hyn y drwg ni saif mewn *barn*  
O flaen y cadarn union.

I'r Arglwydd cenwch lafar *glod*  
A gwnewch ufudd-*dod* llawen fryd,  
Dowch o flaen Duw a pheraidd *dôn*  
Drigolion y ddaear i gyd.

Throughout his translations his style is uniformly good, and it is a distinctive merit in the work, that he has reduced



the number of irrelevant words (*geiriau llanw*) to a minimum. This was a considerable achievement.

He always uses the orthography of his own time, *e.g.* *gennif*, *wrthif*, not *gennyf*, *wrthyf*.

Na alw monof ger dy fron  
I roddi union *gyfrif*,  
Yr wy'n cydnabod fy Nuw hael  
Y bywyd gwael oedd *gennif*.

**Dr. Sion Dafydd Rhys** (1534-161-?) was the son of Dafydd Rhys, who was in the service of Sir William Gruffydd, Garreg Lwyd, Llanfaethlu, Môn, and his mother had been maid to Jane Stradling, who married Sir William Gruffydd. He was born in 1534, and at the age of eighteen became an undergraduate of Christ Church, Oxford. He left there without taking a degree and went to the University of Sienna, in Tuscany, in 1555, where there was a noted Medical School. He seems to have been living in 1617 when his wife died.

He was a bard and prose writer, and undoubtedly one of the most talented men of the sixteenth century. His capacity as a linguist is seen in his work entitled *Rules for the obtaining of the Latin tongue*, which was written in Italian and published at Venice. This was followed by a Latin work—*De Italicæ Linguae Pronuntiatione*, printed at Padua. The work from its very nature shows that he must have been very well versed in Italian, and the Italians themselves thought highly of it.

But his greatest and most useful work for his own country was the publication in 1592 of a Welsh Grammar written in Latin, and entitled *Cambrobrytannicæ Cymræcæve Linguae Institutiones et Rudimenta*, etc. This book, which also contains the rules of Welsh prosody, was printed at the expense of Sir Edward Stradling, and is remarkable for

its wealth of illustrations from the work of the old bards. The author had also the advantage of being an apt versifier himself, and to explain a rule of prosody he often gives an original example of his own. He wrote the work in Latin because he wished to reach the teachers of the people rather than the masses themselves. His preface, however, is written in Welsh, and that in an orthography in which the chief feature is his novel way of representing the double consonants. His alphabet consists of thirty-one letters as given below :

Rhys.	{	a	b	bh	c	ch	d	dh	e	g	gh	ghh	h	i	lh	l	
Mod. W.	{	a	b	f	c	ch	d	dd	e	g	ng	ng	h	i	ll	l	
Rhys.	{	m	mh	n	nh	o	p	ph	rh	r	s	t	th	u	6	y	z
Mod. W.	{	m	mh	n	nh	o	p	ph	rh	r	s	t	th	u	w	y	y
								ff									

It will be noticed that every digraph is formed by means of the letter *h*. He has two separate characters to distinguish the two different sounds of *y*.

Every sound in the Welsh language is included in this alphabet of thirty-one letters.

The only other peculiarity of his orthography is, that where a letter is dropped at the end of a word, he invariably uses an *apostrophe*—thus, *a' Bonedhigion* represents that the *c* of *ac* has been lost ; but when a letter is omitted at the beginning of a word, he uses an *inverted comma*—thus, *a 'i gwladwyr 'i hun* represents that the *e* of *ei* has been dropped in each case. Where we should write *y dyn a'r wraig*, Dr. Sion Dafydd Rhys would write *y dyn a'r wraig*.

**William Myddleton**, or Gwilym Ganoldref as he was known amongst the bards, was the third son of Richard Myddleton, Governor of Denbigh Castle, and was a literary man of considerable attainments. Sion Dafydd Rhys refers to him as 'fy hen gyfaill caredig y milwr calonocaf ar

fôr ac ar dir, a'r mwyaf cyfarwydd mewn barddoniaeth Gymreig, Gwilym Ganoldref.' He added an appendix which contained several fine poems, *e.g.* Gwilym Tew's *Awdl i Fair*, Simwnt Fychan's *Awdl i Birs Mostyn*, and his own *Awdl i Grist*, which he had composed in 1590, to Sion Dafydd Rhys's Grammar.

Although he had been destined for the Church or for the Bar, and had been educated at Oxford for that purpose, he chose the more adventurous career of a soldier, and afterwards joined the Navy and attained the rank of captain. In the war between England and Spain he rendered signal service. An episode is related in *Ancient and Modern Denbigh* of his saving the fleet in 1591 by his dogged watchfulness of the Spaniards, keeping in touch with them the whole time, and giving timely warning to the English admiral.

His elder brother was the well-known Sir Hugh Myddleton, alderman of London and Denbigh, and another brother, Sir Thomas Myddleton, became Lord Mayor of London.

In 1593 he published in Welsh a book entitled *Barddoniaeth neu Brydydhiaeth, y Lhyfr Kyntaf*. This was printed in London, and, as the title shows, he used the same orthography as Sion Dafydd Rhys. This was republished in the *Flores Poetarum Britannicorum* in 1710.

But his greatest work was *Psalmæ y Brenhinol Brophwyd Dafydd gwedi i cynganedhu mewn mesurau Cymreig*, 1603, a translation of the Psalms into metrical *cynganedd* form. He finished this work in January 1595, as he says, *apud Scutum insulam Occidentalium Indorum*; but it was not published until after his death, by his friend Thomas Salisbury in 1603. It was reprinted in 1827 by Gwallter Mechain.

Myddleton was quite a celebrity in his day. It is said that he, with Thomas Prys of Plas Iolyn, who was also a



naval captain and a literary man, and Captain Keat, were the first who smoked tobacco publicly in the streets of London.

Several of his poems exist in MS. The following lines are taken from his *Awdl i Grist* already mentioned :

Crist o nef cerais dy nôd,  
 Cân a gaf y Cun o ged ;  
 Cyweir lef cu eiriol yd,  
 Cyfarchaf Ior cyfeirchiad ;  
 Ei rym pur oedd i'r mab rhad,  
 A'm prynawdd heb gawdd a gâd o'i mau,  
 Ior gorau wir gariad.

Iawn i'r dynion ar a'i 'dwaeniad,  
 I folianu ddwyfawl Ynad ;  
 Iesu fawrhau can's ef yw'r hâd,  
 A gras a dawn gorau o stâd ;  
 Canaf a dwedaf Duw dâd i'm cymorth  
 O'm camwedd rhag oer frad.<sup>1</sup>

**Edward Kyffin** (?—1603) was the son of Thomas Kyffin of Oswestry, and brother of Maurice Kyffin, in whose will he is mentioned as a 'preacher.' His only known work is a translation of the Psalms into metrical form for use in the services of the Church. He had finished some fifty of them before he died in 1603. Of these fifty, however, only I.-XIII. were published by Thomas Salisbury in 1603, under the title *Rhann o Psalmae Dafydd Brophwyd iw canu ar ôl y dôn arferedig yn Eglwys Loegr*. It is clear from the Introductory Letter to this part that Kyffin meant to complete the work had the great plague not cut short his life. The merits of his version are not great, but, when we remember the time and conditions of the work, Kyffin's pioneer attempt to make the Psalms

<sup>1</sup> *Ling. Cymr. Inst. Accur.*, p. 246.



the ballads of the people entitles him to a distinct place in Welsh literature.

**Thomas Prys** (?—1634) of Plas Iolyn was the son of Dr. Ellis Prys who was one of the Commissioners at Caerwys and a member of the Council of the Marches, a distinguished man, and a great supporter of the bards. William Llŷn mentions him several times in his poems, and composed two in his honour. In one he writes of him :

Y karw llu kowir llawenn,  
Kymro pont Kymru a'i penn,  
Kowirdeb sydd yn kordiaw,  
Kariad a lwc arr dy law ;  
Doctor wyd ai akd arr wir,  
A wna geuoc ynn gowir.

He mentions also that he had been ten times Sheriff for his county :

Siryf y llynedd gwedd gwyh  
Sy hardd iawnbarch Sir Ddinbych :

Dengwaith i buost waithionn  
Yn y swydd ddaionus honn.

In his elegy to Gruffudd Hiraethog he reminds that bard of an appointment he had made with Dr. Ellis :

Ymrwmaist fardd brau hardd bris,  
Yr wyl a'r Doctor Elis.

The son, Thomas Prys, was a naval officer, and a contemporary and friend of Captain Myddleton, as has been stated already. He wrote numerous poems ; one bulky MS. in the British Museum contains nothing else but his work, and many of his poems are scattered about in other MSS., but they all await publication. His elegy to Richard Myddleton, the bard's father, which is published in the *Cambro-Briton*, vol. i. p. 271, shows much depth of feeling, and some originality in style.

## CHAPTER XII

### PROSE WRITERS OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

**Sir John Prys** (1502-1554) was the author of the first book printed in Welsh. *Yny lhyvyr hwnn* contains the Welsh alphabet, a Calendar, The Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Ave Maria, the Ten Commandments, and the Seven Virtues, and was published in 1546.

Prys came from an old Brecknockshire family, and had been educated at All Souls' College, Oxford, where he had taken the degree of B.C.L. in 1519. He was a distinguished antiquary, and held many important civil appointments before he received the honour of knighthood.

Dr. Richard Davies in his 'Epistol at y Cembru,' which prefaces William Salesbury's New Testament, refers to Sir John Prys's work in terms of praise.

Other works of his, besides the one above mentioned, were (1) *Historiæ Britannicæ Defensio*, 1573, which was published twenty years after his death by his son, Richard Price, who was also an author; (2) *Description of Cambria* (translated and enlarged by H. Lhwyd), published as a part of the *Historie of Cambria*, 1584.

We have now to notice a group of eminent men who laboured to bring about the translation of the whole of the Scriptures into Welsh. It was naturally the desire of

these men that the New Testament should first be translated and put into the hands of the people. That work had already been accomplished in England, and William Tyndale's translation of the New Testament had gone through several editions between 1525-6 and 1534, and must have been in the possession of many educated Welshmen. Miles Coverdale's translation of the whole Bible had appeared in 1535, and in 1560 the Geneva Bible had circulated freely in England. The circulation and reading of the Epistles and Gospels in Welsh since 1551 had also created an earnest desire for the whole Bible in the native tongue.

The three eminent Welshmen whose names are linked for all time with the translation of the New Testament into Welsh, are Dr. Richard Davies, William Salesbury, and Dr. Thomas Huet.

**Dr. Richard Davies** (1501-1581) was the son of Dafydd ap Gronw, vicar of Gyffin, near Conway. He was born in 1501, and educated at New Inn Hall, Oxford, and as a reward for his scholarship received from Edward VI. the livings of Burnham and Maidsmarton in Buckinghamshire, and a canonry at St. Asaph. He was, however, deprived by Queen Mary, and fled to Geneva, where he lived for a time in very straitened circumstances. At Mary's death he returned, and was preferred by Elizabeth in 1559 to the Bishopric of St. Asaph. Two years later he was translated to St. David's, and it was while here that he laboured vigorously with William Salesbury and Thomas Huet in the great work which saw completion in 1567. This must have been a very active period of his life, for he translated the Books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and some say the two Books of Samuel, into English for the Bishops' Bible of 1568. He was certainly one of the most

eminent scholars of his time, and it is perhaps owing to his prominent share in the Bishops' Bible, a labour in which he must have been engaged about the same time, that he was responsible for five Epistles only in the translation of the New Testament of 1567—viz. 1 Timothy, Hebrews, St. James, and 1 and 2 St. Peter. Dr. Richard Davies contributed the preface to Salesbury's *Testament*, which he called *Epistol at y Cembrau*. This is in style and diction a little masterpiece of Welsh prose. It was reprinted by Charles Edwards in *Dad-seiniad Meibion y Daran* in 1671, and in the *Gwylledydd* in 1834. He died in 1581.

**Dr. Thomas Huet** (?—1591) was a native of Breconshire. He was educated at Cambridge, where he graduated, and was appointed Master of Trinity College, Pontefract. He held the livings of Trefeglwys, Montgomeryshire (1560), Dyserth, Llandecla, and Llanbadarn, Radnorshire. He was collated to a Precentorship of St. David's Cathedral on February 8, 1560-1, and held it until his death on August 19, 1591. In a return of the state of his diocese in 1570 Dr. Richard Davies describes Huet as 'a professor of Dyvynytye and learned also in the eccl'y'asticall lawes.' He was recommended by Bishop Davies, and supported by Archbishop Parker, who calls him 'Dr. Huett,' for the Bishopric of Bangor, which he failed to secure. He translated the Book of the Revelation of St. John, and, it is thought, assisted the Bishop with much of his other work.

**William Salesbury**, the chief translator of the first Welsh edition of the New Testament, was of Norman descent on his father's side, being the second son of Foulk Salusbury of Plas Isa, Llanrwst, who had married one of the Pulestones of Anglesey, who were an old Welsh



family. He was educated at Oxford, and afterwards went to London to study law at Thavies Inn. He never practised, however, and upon his return took up his residence at Cae Du, and devoted the rest of his life to literature.

He knew several languages; and besides his New Testament, he published the following works:

(1) *Oll Synnwyr pen Kembero ygyd* (1546?), a collection of Welsh proverbs by Gruffydd Hiraethog, transcribed and edited with an Introduction by W. Salesbury.

(2) *A Dictionary in Englyshe and Welshe*, which was dedicated to Henry VIII. It was a Welsh-English vocabulary, printed in black letter, and Salesbury thought it answered a great need of the time—‘much necessary to all such Welshmen as will speedily learn the English tongue.’ It was published in 1547, and the explanation it gives of many words is quaint. To it is prefixed a short treatise on the English pronunciation of the letters.

(3) *The baterie of the Popes Botereulx, commonlye called the highe Altare*, 1550.

(4) ‘*A Playne and a familiar Introductiō*, teaching how to pronounce the letters in the Brytish Tongue.’ It was first published in 1550, and revised and augmented in 1567.

(5) *The Descripcion of the Sphere or Frame of the worlde*, 1550. This was a translation of Diadochus Proclus’ work.

(6) *Ban wedy i dynny air yngair allan o hen gyfreith Howel dda*, 1550. This was a pamphlet written to prove that priests had lawfully married wives under the Welsh laws of Howell Dda. It is the first political pamphlet printed in Welsh.

(7) ‘*Kynniver lliith a ban o’r yscrythur lan ac a ddarlleir yr Eccleis pryd Commun y Sulieu a’r Gwiliu trwy’r vlwyddyn : o Cambereiciat W. S.*’ This book was published in 1551, and contained, as its title implies, the portion of Scripture

appointed for the Epistle and Gospel for each Sunday and Festival in the Church year.

(8) *Lliver Gweddi Gyffredin*, 1567 and 1586. In this he was assisted by Dr. Richard Davies.

His last and greatest work was—‘*Testament newydd ein Arglwydd Iesu Christ*. Gwedy ei dynnu yd y gadei yr ancyfiaith ’air yn ei gylydd o’r Groec a’r Llatin, gan newidio ffurf llythyreu y gairiae-dodi. Eb law hyny y mae pop gair a dybiwyt y vot yn andeallus, ai o ran llediaith y ’wlat, ai o ancynefinder y devnydd, wedy ei noti ai eglurhau ar ’ledemyl y tu dalen gydrychiol.’

It was published by Humphrey Toy, London, in 1567.

Each book in it is prefaced by what is called the ‘Argument,’ and each chapter is headed by a synopsis of its contents. From the beginning of St. Matthew to the end of 1 Timothy, the chapters are not divided into verses, but from there to the end, this division is made. The very great bulk of the work was William Salesbury’s. He was responsible for all the books from St. Matthew to 2 Thessalonians inclusive, for 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, 1, 2, 3 John, and the Epistle of St. Jude.

For this great work William Salesbury must for all time deserve well of his countrymen, in spite of the many defects it contains. These were chiefly due to his eccentricities in the treatment of the language, as will be seen from the following quotations :

Can nad cywiliddus-genyf Evāgel Christ : o bleit gallu Duw yw hi er iechydwrieth i bawp un ’sy yn credu.—Rom. i.

Ac yn ddywethaf oll e welspwynt geny vine hefyd vegis gan un antempic.—1 Cor. xv. 8.

The changes he made were extremely awkward, and very offensive to a Welshman’s ear. Besides, the principle upon which he worked was wrong. To Latinise the Welsh

language was to forget the fact that laws had been at work for many centuries changing the words into the form in which he found them. Many of these laws he ignored entirely, and this was equivalent to denying to the language the fundamental principle of developing on its own lines. He set aside those consonantal and vocalic changes which have been discovered since his day to have been consistently at work. Besides, he created a large number of spurious forms, *ein*, *eich*, *sanct*, etc., some of which have unfortunately survived. Many of them died in the middle of the eighteenth century, and the existence of many others terminated with the life of their author. Bishop Davies is supposed to have differed from Salesbury owing to his eccentric treatment of the language, and their project of translating the Old Testament was never carried out, it is said, on this account. Maurice Kyffin criticised Salesbury's work in the following trenchant terms :

E ddarfuessid cyfieuthu'r Testament Newydd ynghylch yr wythfed neu'r nowfed flwyddyn o Deyrnas eyn harglwyddes frenhines *Elizabeth*, ond yr oedd cyfled llediaith a chymaint anghyfiaith yn yr ymadrodd brintiedig, na alle clust gwir Gymro ddioddef clywed mo'naw'n iawn.

Vicar Prichard at a later day gave as one of his reasons for employing his simple metres and homely language :

Am wel'd dwfnwaith enwog Salsbury  
Gan y diddysc heb ei hoffi.

The Rev. Walter Davies (Gwallter Mechain), in a pungent criticism of Salesbury's work, wrote: 'Pe rhoddid enw un o'r pedwar mesur ar hugain cerdd dafod ar waith Wiliam Salsbri yn llythyrenu geiriau Cymraeg—*Clogyrnach* a fyddai yr enw cymhwysaf.'

But his great services to Wales must not be forgotten in



the torrent of adverse criticism which has been poured upon his mistaken attempts to Latinise the language. All the credit must be given him, which rightly belongs to the pioneer of so noble an effort as the translation of the Scriptures into the tongue of his countrymen, a work which, aided by the like unselfish efforts of those who had profited by his mistakes, has had such a far-reaching influence upon the life of his countrymen whose store of literature he did so much to enrich. He is still to Wales what he was in the days of Vicar Prichard—‘yr *enwog* Salsbury.’

The exact date of his death is unknown, but he was alive on the 20th of May 1594, for his name is attached to a petition for an Eisteddfod of that date.

It has been thought that the law passed by Parliament in 1563, enacting that both Testaments were to be translated into Welsh, under the supervision of the five Welsh bishops (the Bishop of Hereford was included), and naming certain penalties if this were not complied with, had something to do with the vigorous prosecution of that great task at this particular time. As a matter of fact, the circulation of the Scriptures in England had influenced Welsh scholars not to be behindhand in the conferment of this benefit upon their country. William Salesbury, in his Preface to *Oll Synnwyr pen Kembero ygyd*, 1546, had counselled the Welsh people to petition the King and Council for the Scriptures in their vernacular: ‘Pererindotwch yn droednoeth, at ras y Brenhin ae Gyncor y ddeisyf cael cennat y cael yr yscrythur lan yn ych iaith, er mwyn y cyniver ohanoch or nyd yw n abyf, nac mewn kyfflypwriaeth y ddyscy Sasnaec.’ These words show that the work had been thought of before the passing of this law, and the latter would therefore be nothing more



than legal sanction by Parliament to its being undertaken by men responsible to them for the completion of the task.

The history of the translation of the whole Bible into Welsh will now be given.

**Dr. William Morgan** (1547-1604) was the man mainly responsible for this great undertaking.

He was the son of John Morgan of Wybrnant, near Penmachno, and was educated at St. John's College, Cambridge. In 1575, when he was twenty-eight, he received the living of Trallwm (Welshpool), and after remaining there for some years engaged in the task which was to immortalise him, he was charged with heresy by some of his parishioners, and ordered to appear before Archbishop Whitgift in 1585. The latter found him innocent of the charges, and when he discovered the work upon which he was engaged, he gave him considerable encouragement to go on with his translation. The Archbishop's support not only assisted him financially, but also led many learned men to offer their help in the excellent work.

Amongst them were (1) Bishop Hughes (1537-1600) of St. Asaph, who held that see from 1573 to 1600. The nature of his assistance is not mentioned by Dr. Morgan.

(2) Dr. Hugh Bellot (1542-1596), who had been educated at Cambridge, and was raised to the see of Bangor in 1585, and afterwards translated to Chester, where he died in 1596.

(3) Dr. Gabriel Goodman (1528-1601), who was born at Ruthin in 1528, graduated at Cambridge, afterwards became chaplain to William Cecil, Lord Burleigh, and through his influence became Vicar-Choral of St. Paul's in 1558, and in 1560 held the same office at Westminster, where he became Dean in 1561. He translated the first Epistle to

the Corinthians in the Bishops' Bible in 1568. He afterwards became a benefactor to his native place, where in 1590 he established a Grammar School which still exists.

(4) Dr. Morgan also acknowledges in his Letter of Dedication the help of Dr. Richard Vaughan (1551-1607). He was born at Cefn Amwlch in Lleyne, and, previous to his acceptance of the see of Bangor in 1595, he was prebendary of St. Paul's and archdeacon of Middlesex. In 1597 he became Bishop of Chester, and in 1604 was translated to London where he died in 1607.

Archdeacon Edmwnd Prys and Dr. Powell are also mentioned by Dr. Morgan as having helped him.

It is difficult to ascertain the exact nature of the help he received from all these named. In his Dedicatory Letter he says that he translated the whole of the Old Testament and revised the New Testament. It is quite possible, therefore, that their help lay in the reading and revising of his work. In 1583 he says that he had only translated the Pentateuch, and his work for the next five years, if he did it single-handed, must have been very arduous. He stayed at Dr. Gabriel Goodman's house at Westminster while the work was being printed. In 1595 Dr. Morgan became Bishop of Llandaff, and in 1601 he was translated to St. Asaph. He died there in 1604 and was buried in the cathedral chancel.

His memorable work which was published in 1588 under the title *Y Beibl Cyssegr-Lan, sef yr Hen Destament a'r Newydd*, is said by capable judges to be a very close translation of the original languages. The Welsh is excellent throughout, and in this respect it is the very antithesis of William Salesbury's work. An example from each will illustrate this.

William Salesbury wrote :

Dew yr hwn a wnaeth y byd, a'r oll pethae ys ydd ynthaw, can y vot ef yn Arglwydd nef a' daear, ny thrice ef mewn templeae gwneythuredic-a-dwyllaw, ac nid addolir a dwyllaw dynion, val pe bei arno eisiae dim, ac ef e yn rhoddi i bawp vywyt ac anhenetl a' phop peth.—Acts xvii.

This is rendered by Dr. Morgan :

24. Duw yr hwn a wnaeth y byd a'r hyn sydd ynddo oll, efe yn Arglwydd nef a ddaiar nid yw yn aros mewn temlau o waith dwylo :

25. Ac ni wasanaethir ef â dwylo dyniö, fel pe bai arno eisieu dim, gan ei fod efe yn rhoddi i bawb fywyd, ac anadl, a phob peth oll :

Side by side with the great movement of translating the Scriptures, was a similar movement which also owed its origin to the Reformation spirit, and which had for its object the spread of that kind of theological literature of which Maurice Kyffin's *Deffyniad y Ffydd* forms a typical instance.

**Maurice Kyffin** (?—1598). Numerous speculations have been rife as to Maurice Kyffin's origin, and he has invariably been confused with others of the same name. But the patient researches of a recent writer show that he belonged to the Plâs yn Hersedd family, through his mother Catherine Iengaf, the daughter of Robert Llwyd Hên. Plâs yn Hersedd is in Ystrad Alun, in the parish of Hope, near Wrexham, and Maurice Kyffin's father, Thomas Kyffin, belonged to the town of Oswestry, close by. It was here that Maurice Kyffin came into contact with William Llŷn, who resided at Oswestry, as already stated, for the last twenty years of his life.

Nothing can be stated with certainty about his education, but that it must have been excellent is proved by his translation of Terence's *Andria* into English in 1588, and



by the fact that he was tutor in Lord Buckhurst's family, 1578-82, and prepared his three sons for Oxford. In 1587 he had written the *Blessednes of Brytaine*, which contained a brief rehearsal, as he tells us, of the benefits enjoyed 'not only all England over but also in forrein Partes' under the 'blessed Rule of our Royall Queene Elizabeth.' This book was dedicated to the Earl of Essex.

In 1562 Dr. Jewel, Bishop of Salisbury, published his great work, the *Apologia Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ*, which maintained that the Reformers were the true successors of the Apostles, because the Church of Rome had erred from the teaching of Christ and His Apostles; and that the Reformation was a return to uncorrupted Christianity. It was, in short, a justification of the position of the Church of England.

*Deffyniad Ffydd Eglwys Loegr* was an elegant translation of this work published by Maurice Kyffin in 1595, and it is considered one of the best examples of Welsh prose both in purity of language and syntactical correctness that the literature of our country possesses.

After having held positions of some importance under the Crown, *e.g.* Surveyor of the Muster Rolls in the Low Countries, 1588; Vice-Treasurer of the Forces in Normandy, 1591; and Surveyor-General of the Musters in Ireland, 1596—Maurice Kyffin died in the last-named country in 1598.<sup>1</sup>

**Henry Parry** (1561-1617) was a contemporary of Maurice Kyffin. He was educated at Oxford, where he took the degree of B.A., 1580, M.A., 1583, and B.D. in 1597, and became chaplain to Sir Richard Bulkeley of Beaumaris. In 1601 he became Vicar of Rhoscolyn in

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to W. P. Williams, Esq., Cae'r Onnen, Bangor, for most of the facts relating to Maurice Kyffin's life.



Anglesey, a living which he vacated in 1606 when he accepted that of Trefdraeth in the same county. In 1613 he was made a Canon of Bangor, and in 1614 he received the living of Llanfachreth, Môn. His only known work is the *Egluryn Phraethineb. Sebh, Dosparth ar Retoreg, un or saith gelbhydhyd, yn dyscu lhuniaith ymadrodd, a'i pherthynassau*, 1595. This work has been, erroneously, attributed to William Salesbury, who had left in manuscript a short collection of the *figures of Syntax*. The work of Salesbury, however, is of a totally different nature. Henry Parry prepared the *Egluryn* at the request of his patron, Sir John Salesbury of Lleweni, who probably shared in the expense of its publication. Two editions have since appeared—one in 1805-7 in the *Greal*, and the other in 1829.

**Huw Lewys** (1562-1634), a native of Carnarvonshire. He was educated at All Souls' College, Oxford, where he matriculated August 10, 1582, and graduated B.A., 1587, and M.A., 1590. He was collated to the rectory of Llanddeiniolen in 1589, and became Chancellor of Bangor in 1608. He published in 1595 a translation of a work which he states in the title-page was first written in Dutch by the learned preacher Otho Wermulerus. It had been translated into English by Miles Coverdale. Huw Lewys called it *Perl mewn Adfyd*. It was a devotional work showing that the soul could be disciplined by adversity, and pointing out the sources of spiritual consolation in time of trouble. It also contains a letter to Dr. Vaughan, Bishop of Bangor, etc., and a few *englynion* to the same prelate. Hugh Lewys had a son, Morgan, who attained some distinction as a 'Prydydd.'

**Humphrey Llwyd** (1527-1568) was born at Foxhall, in the parish of Henllan, Denbighshire, in 1527. His name occurs as a commoner of Brasenose College, Oxford. He graduated B.A. in 1547, and M.A. in 1551; he then

became private physician to the family of Lord Arundel, who was at the time Chancellor of the University. He married Barbara, daughter of the Hon. George Lumley, and he collected for the Lumley family many scarce and valuable works which were afterwards purchased by James I. and placed in the British Museum.<sup>1</sup> In 1563 he returned to Denbigh, his native town, and practised there, and was returned as M.P. for Denbigh in that year. About this time he became known to the noted geographer Ortelius, for whom he formed an ardent friendship. He furnished him with several maps and drawings for his geography entitled *Theatrum orbis terrarum*, a subject for which Llwyd had acquired considerable taste.

His published works are numerous, and amongst them were :

- (1) *An Almanack and Calendar*, an astronomical work 'containing the day, hour, and minute of the change of the moon for ever,' etc.
- (2) *The Treasury of healthe conteynyng many profitable Medycines gathered out of Hypocrates, Galen and Avycen, by one Petrus Hyspanus translated . . . by H. Lloyd who hath added . . . the causes . . . of everye dysease, with the Aphorismes of Hypocrates, and Jacobus de Partybus . . . With an epistle of Diocles unto Kyng Antigonus* [1550]. Another edition appeared in 1585.
- (3) A translation of the *Judgment of Urines*, 1551.
- (4) *De Monâ Druidum Insulâ Antiquitati suæ restituta . . . et de Armamentario Romano*: a letter dated 5th April 1568 and addressed to Ortelius; it was printed by Sir John Price at the end of his *Historiæ Britannicæ Defensio*, 1573.

<sup>1</sup> *Ancient and Modern Denbigh*, p. 183.

- (5) *Commentarioli Britannicæ Descriptionis Fragmentum*, a work of great research, written in 1568, and printed at Cologne in 1572. This appeared also as *The Breviary of Britayne Englished by Thomas Twyne in 1573*.

His chief work, however, was the *Historie of Cambria*, compiled from the works of Geoffrey of Monmouth, Caradoc of Llancarvan, Mathew Paris, and others. He failed to finish it, as did also Sir John Prys who had originally designed it. It was completed by Dr. David Powel in 1584, and was afterwards further augmented by W. Wynne, Fellow of Jesus College, Oxford.

Humphrey Llwyd died in August 1568, aged 41.

**Dr. David Powel** (?—1598), a learned divine and antiquary, was born about 1550, went to Oxford in 1568, and graduated in 1573. He held many important livings, and amongst them that of Ruabon. He died in 1598. His chief work was the completion of the *Historie of Cambria*, 1584, in the publication of which he was considerably helped by Sir Henry Sidney, Lord of the Marches, to whom he was chaplain. Many editions of this book have since been published; that of 1697 was augmented and improved by the Rev. W. Wynne, Fellow of Jesus College, and a second edition of this appeared in 1702, and another in 1784. In 1832 Richard Llwyd of Llannerch Brochwel, in Montgomeryshire, published a revised and corrected edition, to which was added a collection of *Topographical Notices*.

In 1585 he edited and published *Pontici Vironnii . . . Britannicæ Historiæ Libri Sex*, and *Itinerarium Cambriæ*, and *Cambriæ Descriptio* of Gerald the Welshman.

Dr. Powel also assisted Bishop Morgan in the translation of the Bible, and had contemplated the production of a Welsh Dictionary, which, however, owing to his



ill-health and comparatively early death, he failed to complete.

**Henry Salesbury** (1561—?) was a noted physician and antiquarian of this century. He belonged to a branch of the ancient Salusbury family, of Lleweni, and was born at Dolbelider in Denbighshire in 1561. He was a commoner of St. Alban's Hall, Oxford, in 1581, and after taking a degree in Arts he proceeded to study medicine, and afterwards settled in practice at Denbigh. His only published work is a Welsh Grammar, entitled *Grammatica Britannica*, which was printed in London in 1593, and dedicated to Henry, Earl of Pembroke. He had also compiled a Welsh-Latin Dictionary, which was, however, never published. Dr. Davies of Mallwyd is said to have made some use of it in the compilation of his valuable Dictionary. It is also fairly certain that he used a similar work left by William Llŷn.

Besides the Reformation movement which led to the translation of the Scriptures and the Prayer Book, and the publication of several devotional works, the majority of which were also translations, there was another movement in the sixteenth century which contributed to Welsh literature, though not very largely, and which may rightly be termed the Counter-Reformation movement. Its chief exponents were Morris Clynnog, Dr. Gruffydd Roberts, and Roger Smyth.

**Dr. Morris Clynnog** (?—1580-1), a native of Clynnog, Carnarvonshire, was educated at Christ Church, Oxford, where he graduated B.C.L. in 1548, and became chaplain to Cardinal Pole. He was appointed Bishop of Bangor by Mary in 1558, but the queen died before his consecration. He fled to Rome along with Bishop Goldwell and Gruffydd Roberts in 1559. He was appointed Camerarius of the



English Hospital at Rome in 1567, and Warden in 1578. In 1579 he was appointed by the Pope the first Rector of the English College in that city, and was deprived in the same year on account of a dispute between the Welsh and English students. He held the Wardenship of the English Hospital until his death in 1580 or 1581 by drowning. Whilst at Rome he wrote the *Athravaeth Gristnogawl*, a short catechism of religious doctrine, which was edited and published at Milan by Dr. Gruffydd Roberts in 1568. There was only one copy of this book extant in 1879, which fortunately came under the notice of the Cymmrodorion Society which published a *facsimile* of the work in 1880. The introduction was written by Dr. Gruffydd Roberts, who commends the work highly on account of its terseness and lucidity.

**Dr. Gruffydd Roberts** was a native of Trefalun, Denbighshire. He was probably the Gruffydd Roberts who graduated M.A. at Oxford in 1555. He was appointed Archdeacon of Anglesey by Morris Clynnog, and admitted on October 19, 1558, an office of which he was immediately deprived. He fled to Rome in 1559, and became chaplain of the English Hospital in 1564. Cardinal Borromeo took him to Milan in 1566, and appointed him Canon Theological of Milan in the same year. He afterwards became the Cardinal's Confessor, and Professor of Philosophy at Milan, and was mentioned for a Cardinal's hat in 1595.

Gruffydd Roberts's first literary work was entitled *Y Drych Cristnogawl*. It was designed in three parts, but the first is the only part known to have appeared, and this was published eighteen years after his Grammar by his friend Dr. Roger Smyth at Rouen in 1585. It is written in excellent Welsh, like everything that proceeded from the pen of the 'great Doctor of Milan.'

His chief work, however, was his Grammar of the Welsh language, which was published at Milan in 1567, and entitled—

*Dosparth Byrr ar y rhann gyntaf i ramadeg cymraeg, lle cair llawer o bynciau anhepcor i un a chwennychai na doedyd y gymraeg yn ddilediaith, nai scrifennu'n iawn.*

A orchfygo yma, a goronir fry. 1567. Primo Martii.

It is interesting to have Maurice Kyffin's opinion on this work. He wrote thus :

'Mi a welais ddosparth byr ar y rhan gyntaf i Ramadeg cymraec a brintiesid er ys-talm, yr hwn sydd ddarn o waith dyscedig ynghelfyddyd gramadec, mor buraid, mor lath-raidd, ag mor odidawg ei ymadroddiad, na ellir damuno dim perffeithiach yn hynny o beth.'

Dr. Gruffydd Roberts's alphabet consisted of twenty-six letters, and only differed from that used to-day in its omission of *ff*, and in its representation of the digraphs thus—*ḋ*, *l̇*, *u* (for *w*).

These peculiarities of orthography have been criticised adversely, because of the strain upon the eyes caused by looking out for these dots, and of the liability to misprints. On the other hand, the system has the advantage of not using *double letters* for any *single* sound, so that in a word like *callon* it would at once be recognised that the letter *l* is doubled, for Dr. Roberts would write *l̇* for the modern letter *ll*.

Only about half a dozen books were written in this orthography.

Dr. Roberts led the way to the discovery of the laws of sound-changes in words borrowed from the Latin. The same laws were dimly perceived by Edward Llwyd in 1707. It is only in comparatively recent years that they have been fully discovered, and it has been shown by Sir John Rhys

how very gradually the changes took place, so gradually as to be hardly perceptible. Dr. Gruffydd Roberts, on the other hand, thought that the changes took place according to fixed laws, as soon as the words were borrowed. Though he was mistaken in this, it was the light of his genius that led the way to this important discovery.

The dates of Roberts's birth and death are unknown, but, from a letter of his, now in the Record Office, it is certain that he was alive on May 28, 1596.

**Dr. Roger Smyth** (1546-1625) was a native of St. Asaph, and was educated on the Continent, probably at the University of Douay, and at the English College at Rome. He was at the latter place in 1579. About 1582 he came to Rouen to the order of Bridgettine nuns, formerly of Sion in England, and seems to have remained with them till their removal to Lisbon in 1594. He removed to Paris before 1596, and here he and others made an attempt at establishing an English College for the education of priests in 1598, which, however, did not succeed. He remained at Paris until his death in 1625.

In 1585 he published Dr. Gruffydd Roberts's *Drych Cristnogawl* at Rouen.

The first book by Dr. Smyth was entitled *Crynodeb o Addysc Cristnogawl*, Paris, 1609. It was a translation from the Latin, and was published afterwards in an enlarged form under the title *Opus Catechisticum D. Petri Canisii . . . sef yw: Svm ne grynodebo adysc Gristnogawl*, Paris, 1611. It was a compendium of religious doctrine by a learned Jesuit. In it Smyth follows the orthography of Dr. G. Roberts.

Another work translated by Dr. Smyth was published in Paris in 1615, and entitled *Theater du Mond, sef iw Gorsedd y Byd*.



All Roger Smyth's printed works were translations. They were religious works, written from a Roman Catholic standpoint, and translated into Welsh with the hope of impressing his fellow-countrymen. Considering that he spent most of his time abroad, he wrote very good Welsh. When he translated any passages from the poetical books of the Bible, he did so in verse.

As his books were printed in Paris, and there is no *w* in the French alphabet, he had to resort to the use of two *v*'s as a substitute for that letter.

**Father John Salisbury** (1575-1625), another Roman Catholic writer of distinction, was a native of Merionethshire, and probably a son of the Rug branch of the Salisbury family. He was educated at the Jesuits' College of St. Albans, Valladolid, which he entered on 22nd June 1595. He was ordained priest on 21st November 1600. He was sent to England in 1603, and in 1605 he entered the Society of Jesus as a 'missioner' in North Wales. In 1615 he became the Superior of the North and South Wales District. In 1622 he became Superior of the College of St. Francis Xavier, which he had founded. He was appointed procurator of the English Province to Rome, but he died while preparing for his journey thither in 1625.

John Salisbury translated and published in 1618 a work entitled *Eglwrhad Helaeth-lawn o'r Athrawaeth Gristnogavwl. A gyfansodhwyd y tro cyntaf yn Italaeg trwy waith yr Ardherchoccaf a'r Hybarchaf Gardinal Rhobert Bellarmin*. This was a Catechism on Christian Doctrine, and the translation is written in idiomatic Welsh. The work was printed at the press of St. Omer College, France. Salisbury is said to have composed other devotional works, but they were not published.



## CHAPTER XIII

### PROSE AND VERSE WRITERS OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

**Vicar Prichard** (1579-1644).—Rhys Prichard, Vicar of Llanymddyfri (Llandovery), was, perhaps, the man who exercised the greatest influence on Welsh national life on its religious side in the seventeenth century.

The few details that can be gleaned of his personal history show that he was born at Llandovery in 1579, educated at Jesus College, Oxford, where he proceeded in 1597, graduated B.A. in 1602, and M.A. in 1626. He was ordained at Wytham in Essex by the Suffragan Bishop of Colchester in 1602. In the same year, he was presented to the livings of Llandingad and Llanymddyfri by the Bishop of St. David's. In 1613 King James gave him the living of Llanedi. This was probably through the influence of Robert, Earl of Essex, to whom he was chaplain. The highest dignity he attained in the Church was that of Chancellor of St. David's in 1626. He died in 1644, leaving land to the value of £20 per annum to establish a Free Grammar School at Llanymddyfri.

The state of the country at that time was one of notorious ignorance, and, judging from the evils the good Vicar set himself to remedy, the life of the masses was

as coarse and vulgar as it well could be. If there is any doubt on this point, let his verses on the abuse of Sunday be read. Not one person in a hundred could read, and for the first twenty-eight years of Vicar Prichard's ministry there were few Bibles in the country except those chained to the lecterns in the churches.

It was the genius of the Vicar that he understood his countrymen, and in his great humanitarian effort to reform them he had the unerring foresight to know how to influence them along lines which would bring out the best traits in their character. He knew their poetic instinct, their love of rhymes and songs, and with a soul fired with the desire of bringing home spiritual truths to the masses, he devoted himself to the task of translating his popular sermons into song, and circulating the copies amongst the people. The metres he generally employed were very simple. The majority of his verses are written in four-lined stanzas, each line invariably trochaic (—) and consisting of eight syllables, *e.g.*—

Er croeshoelio'r Iesu drosom  
A rhoi taliad llawn am danom;  
Eto ni bydd neb cadwedig  
Ond a gretto ynddo'n unig.

But he frequently varies the metre in the same poem, and sometimes in the same stanza there is an unexpected expansion of the line, *e.g.*—

Er dy fod ti'n elyn Duw  
Wrth naturiaeth a'th ddrwg ryw,  
Cred yn Nghrist, fe'th wna o elyn,  
I'th nefol dad yn anwyl bentyn.

He is also fond of a stanza, each of the four lines of which

contains seven syllables, but the third line begins with a strongly accented syllable, *e.g.*—

A dysg yn brudd gydnabod,  
Nad oes o flaen y Drindod,  
*Iawn* am bechod ond gwaed Crist,  
A'i angau trist a'i 'fudd-dod.

In other cases, a stanza similar to the above in other respects has *eight* syllables in the third line, which begins with an unaccented syllable.

A gwybydd fod Duw'n foddlon,  
I'r iawn a wnaeth Crist drosom,  
Ac er ei fwyn yn barod iawn  
Roi pardwn llawn i'r ffyddlon.

Other four-lined stanzas which have seven syllables in each line, begin the first and third lines with an accented syllable, and the second and fourth with an unaccented, *e.g.*—

Ni wnaeth Duw un gene 'rioed,  
Mewn tir, mewn coed, mewn dyfnder,  
Nes partoi ei ymborth tyn  
I'r geneu cyn ei ganer.

Vicar Prichard's chief aim was to be understood by the masses of the people. It was for this purpose that he used such free metres, and he never hesitated to use words quite foreign to the Welsh language as such, provided that they were well known colloquially. His work bristles with such colloquial forms as *gweld*, *ange*, *cadache*, *craits*, *crippian*, *twtchis*, *part na pharsel*, *desprad*, *dwnshwn*, *bysse*.

Although he descended to these corrupt forms in order to gain the ear of the people, he was a bard of much ability, and could write good verse when he chose.

One feature of his poems is the practical advice he gives

the people on matters pertaining to their temporal welfare as well as spiritual. He advises them to be careful in making their wills, and to be abstemious in the matter of eating and drinking, with quite as much earnestness as he tells them to pray night and morning and before engaging in religious worship. He seems to have a word for all, the young man, the soldier, the ploughman, the drover, and in particular he addresses himself with much force to the drunkard.

Numerous editions of this excellent work (for so it must always be esteemed, owing to its elevating influence upon the Welsh people), *Canwyll y Cymry*, have appeared. The first part was published in 1646, the second in 1659, the third in 1670, and the fourth and last part in 1672; all were edited by Stephen Hughes. In 1771 a poetical version of it appeared in English, translated by the Vicar of Llawhaden.

Disturbances in Nature, and calamities such as plague and pestilence, he held up as warnings of Divine displeasure. He gives a vivid description of the plague in London in 1603, with all its attendant horrors.

Gweirydd ap Rhys draws attention to an article in the *Traethodydd*, vol. ii. pp. 143-155, which divides Vicar Prichard's poems into three classes: (1) Those that throw light upon the condition of the country at the time, and the events of that age. (2) Those that contain a synopsis of the great doctrines of revealed religion. (3) Those that embody a collection of rules or counsels to be followed in every condition of life.

**Edward Dafydd** (?—1690) of Margam is said to have been a *Disgybl Cerdd Dafod* of the Morgannwg School of bards in 1580; but this is scarcely possible, for he himself states that he was a *Pencerdd* at the *Gorsedd* at Bewpyr in



1681. His chief work was the collection and arrangement of *Cyfrinach y Beirdd*, an important work of its kind. The first part of it is a treatise on Welsh prosody, and the second relates the customs of the bards, their theology, their alphabet, and the rules of their *gorsedd*. The whole work has been the subject of much controversy, and there is little doubt that much of it is fictitious.

✓ **Edward James** (1570-1610), was a native of Glamorganshire. He entered St. Edmund's Hall, Oxford, in 1586, and graduated B.A. in 1589, and M.A. in 1592. He became Vicar of Caerleon in 1596, and Rector of Shirenewton in 1597. He was appointed Chancellor of Llandaff in 1606, which office he held until his death in 1610. He translated and published in 1606 a work which is generally known as *Llyfr yr Homiliau*. Its full title reads:

Pregethau a osodwyd allan trwy awdurdod, i'w darllein ymhob Eglwys blwyf a phob capel er adailadaeth i'r bobl annyscedig. Gwedi eu troi i'r iaith Gymeraeg, drwy waith *Edward James*.

The language in which these homilies are couched has received well-deserved praise from many writers for its purity and flexibility. The editor of *Llyfryddiaeth y Cymry* expressed the following opinion of the work:

Y mae ei gyfieithiad o'r Homiliau yn gyfieithiad rhagorol dros ben, ac yn teilyngu sylw, pe na bai ond er mwyn ei briodwedd wir Gymreig yn unig. . . . Saif Edward James ar orsaf uchel fel gwasanaethwr ei gyd-genedl, yn ymyl Gwilym Salsbri, yr Esgob Morgan, a'r Esgob Parri; ac fel ysgriflenwr Cymraeg dilediaith, nid yw yn ol i un o honynt.<sup>1</sup>

**Dr. Richard Parry** (1560-1623), Bishop of St. Asaph, was the author of the revised translation of the Bible. He was born at Ruthin in 1560, and received his early education

<sup>1</sup> *Llyfr. y Cymry*, p. 80.

under the celebrated Camden at Westminster School, whence he proceeded in 1580 to Christ Church, Oxford. In 1592 he became Vicar of Gresford and Chancellor of Bangor, and in 1599 Dean of Bangor. At the death of Bishop Morgan in 1604, he was consecrated Bishop of St. Asaph. Dr. Parry's Bible was entitled :

Y Bibl Cyssegr-lan, sef yr Hen Destament a'r Newydd.  
1620.

The differences between Dr. Parry's Bible and Dr. Morgan's are very numerous. It is thought that very much of the credit for this Revised Version of the Bible belongs to Dr. John Davies of Mallwyd. This is the version (with slight modifications in orthography) which is still in use.

The necessity for a revised translation of the Bible arose because of the very limited number of copies of Dr. Morgan's Bible which had been printed, and these had now stood the wear of thirty years. The syntax also required some modifications, for Dr. Morgan had kept rather too closely to the original. Sometimes in the 1620 Bible the order and position of a whole verse were changed. Although, on the whole, Bishop Parry's Bible is a great advance on Bishop Morgan's, numerous instances have been pointed out where the latter excelled. The 1620 Bible was printed in black letter, but was larger and rather more cumbersome than that of 1588.

Bishop Parry died at Dyserth, in Flintshire, in 1623, and was buried in the Cathedral at St. Asaph, as Bishop Morgan had been.

It should be mentioned that the 1620 Bible was only meant to be used in the churches. The first portable Welsh Bible was published in London in 1630 by Rowland Heilyn and Sir Thomas Middleton—a very

important step, because it really put it within reach of the people.

✓ **Dr. John Davies** (1570?-1644) was the son of Dafydd ab Ioan, of Llanrhaiadr, Denbighshire, and he was born at Llanferres, in the same county, in 1570. He states that Robert Vaughan of Hengwrt, the noted antiquarian, was his cousin. He was educated at Ruthin, in what school is not certain, for Dr. Goodman had not yet founded his public Grammar School. In the preface to his Dictionary he says that Dr. Morgan was one of his teachers, 'canys wrth draed y Gamaliel hwnnw y cefais fy addysgu a'm dwyn i fynu.' In 1589 he went to Jesus College, Oxford, where he graduated in 1594, and little is known of him for the next few years. He married Jane, daughter of John Wynn, of Llwyn Ynn, the sister of Bishop Parry's wife. In 1604 James I. preferred him to the living of Mallwyd. In 1608 he again returned to Oxford and stayed there until 1612, when he was appointed to a canonry at St. Asaph. In 1613 he became Rector of Llanymawddwy, and two years later of Darowen, which he afterwards exchanged for Llanfawr, near Bala. In 1617 he also exchanged the canonry at St. Asaph for the prebend of Llannefydd. It will thus be seen that he was one of the most notable pluralists of his time, but not all have been so deserving, even if Dr. Davies had done nothing more than assist in the revision of the 1588 Bible.

Dr. Davies published in 1621 his Welsh Grammar, written in Latin and entitled *Antiquæ Linguae Britannicæ . . . Rudimenta*. It is a book very rich in quotations from the old bards, and one writer has censured it because it contains none from prose literature. In the same year he also published *A Catechism*.

In 1632 he published his Welsh-Latin Dictionary and



Latin-Welsh Dictionary in one book. This was the standard dictionary of the language for over a hundred and fifty years, until Dr. Pughe's Welsh-English Dictionary was published in 1803. Nevertheless it was a very scanty work, and it seems, according to his own statement, the time the learned Doctor bestowed upon it was only what he could snatch from other works which he considered of more importance.

He also published in 1632 an excellent translation of Edmund Bunney's adaptation of Robert Parsons' *Christian Directory* for Protestant readers, and entitled his work *Llyfr y Resolusion*, which he says he translated 'er lles i'w blwyfolion.' Five subsequent editions of this work has appeared.

His last book was issued in 1633, and was entitled *Y Llyfr Plygain a'r Catechism*.

He died in 1644, and was buried in the chancel of Mallwyd Church, where there exists to his memory a mural tablet of white marble containing a long Latin inscription.

It is quite possible that he had some share in the preparation of *Y Llyfr Gweddi Gyffredin* of 1621, which was edited by Edmund Prys.

✓ **Robert Llwyd**, the Vicar of Chirk (Y Waun), 1615, and Rector of Llandyssul, Montgomeryshire, 1625, is best known as a translator of the devotional works of the Rev. Arthur Dent.

Rowland Vaughan refers to him as a learned *littérateur*, and also calls him 'fy anwyl athro.' He was an excellent writer of Welsh, and a deep religious fervour seems to pervade his work. In 1629 he published *Pregeth ynghylch edifeirwch*, a translation of a sermon by Arthur Dent. This was followed in 1630 by his chief work, which was called *Llwybr hyffordd yn cyfarwyddo yr anghyfarwydd i'r nefoedd*,



also a translation of a work by Arthur Dent, which was written in the form of a catechism. In his preface he pleads with his countrymen to abandon the dice-board, the tavern, and unprofitable games (he mentions bowls, football, and tennis amongst them) and to cultivate reading.

He was retained by the Commissioners of Cromwell in 1650, but there is no mention of his name at the Restoration, and it is probable that he died before 1660.

✓ **Rowland Vaughan** (?—1667) of *Caer Gai* was both a bard and prose-writer, and belonged to a distinguished Welsh family which had lived at *Caer Gai* for some centuries. His father, John Vaughan, had married Ellen, daughter of Hugh Nannau of Nannau, and Rowland, who was at Oxford at the time of his father's death in 1620, returned to take care of his patrimony. His lot was cast in troublous times. In the struggle between King and Parliament he took the Royalist side, and, it is said, fought at Naseby in 1645, where he held the rank of captain. This is very probable, because in that year Cromwell's bands burned *Caer Gai*, and gave his inheritance to a kinsman who was on their side. The bard mentions this in the following *englyn*:

Caer Gai nid difai fu gwaith tân—arnad,  
Oernych wyd yrŵan;  
Caer aethost i'm câr weithian,  
Caer Gai lle bu cywir gân.

It is also said that he suffered imprisonment for three years, but this is not mentioned on any authority, and it is more probable that he was in hiding until the Restoration. In his wanderings he came across the bard William Phylip of Ardudwy, who was also in a similar plight. The meet-

ing took place on one of the Merionethshire mountains, and Rowland Vaughan gave vent to his feelings thus :

Pe cawn i'r Pengryinion  
Rhwnng ceulan ac afon,  
Ac yn fy llaw goedffon o linon ar li,  
Mi gurwn yn gethin  
Ynghweryl fy mrenin,  
Mi a'u gyrrwn yn un byddin i'w boddi.

To which William Phylip replied :

Pe cawn i'r Pengryniaid  
Ar ben goriwaered,  
Er gwaned a hyned wyf heno,  
A phastwn du-ddraenen  
Rwy'n ddeuddeg a thrigain  
Chwi a'm gwelech i'n llawen yn llowio.

At the Restoration, Caer Gai was rebuilt, and the following stanza carved over the entrance :

Dod glod i bawb yn ddibrin,  
A char dy frawd cyffredin ;  
Ofna Dduw can's hyn sydd dda,  
Ac anrhydedda'r brenin.

Rowland Vaughan was the author of several hymns and carols. He, and not Edmund Prys, was responsible for the following lines :

Na thro dy wyneb, Arglwydd glân,  
Oddiwrth un truan agwedd  
Y sydd o flaen dy borth yn awr  
Mewn cystudd mawr yn gorwedd.

And the well-known lines beginning 'Tyr'd Yspryd Glân i'n c'lonnau ni' are also his.

It is, however, as a translator of prose works rather than as a poet that he is best known. The first book he trans-

lated was *The Practice of Piety*, by Dr. Lewis Bayly, Bishop of Bangor, a book which is supposed to have considerably influenced John Bunyan. He published it in 1630 under the title *Yr Ymarfer i Dduwioldeb*, and a second edition corrected and amended by the author appeared in 1656, and it was so popular that it went through five editions before 1710.

In 1658 several translations appeared from his pen, and amongst them

- (1) *Prifannau Crefydd Gristnogawl*.
- (2) *Yr Arfer o Weddi yr Arglwydd*.
- (3) *Prifannau Sanctaidd neu Lawlyfr o Weddiau*, a translation of Dr. Brough's *Manual of Prayer*, made at the request of Colonel William Salusbury of Bachymbyd, at whose expense it was printed and distributed among the poor.
- (4) *Ymddiffynniad rhag pla o Schism*.

Rowland Vaughan died in 1667.

In 1630 appeared an important edition of the Bible, which contained the Book of Common Prayer, the Old Testament, the Apocrypha, the New Testament, and Edmund Prys's metrical version of the Psalms. This useful book (for it was of portable size, which made it possible to have a copy of the Scriptures in the home) was the result of a joint effort by Rowland Heilyn and Sir Thomas Middleton, two Welshmen resident in London.

**Rowland Heilyn** (?—1637) was the last heir male of Pentre Heilyn in the parish of Llandysilio, Montgomeryshire. He settled in London, and accumulated great wealth, which he freely dispensed in religious charities. He contributed towards the publication of this edition of the Bible, and also of the *Lhwybr Hyffordd* and Dr.

Davies' *Dictionary*, for the benefit of his countrymen. He was elected Alderman and Sheriff of the City of London, and died in 1637.

**Sir Thomas Middleton** (?—1631), his coadjutor in this good work, was the fourth son of Richard Middleton of Denbigh. He was Lord Mayor of London in 1613, and was a brother of the great Sir Hugh Middleton and the bard Gwilym Ganoldref. He died in 1631.

An anonymous book which may be regarded as a sequel to the publication of this crown octavo edition of the Bible, was that which appeared in 1631, entitled *Car-wr y Cymru*. Its object was to exhort the Cymry to make use of the Scriptures now brought within their reach. Amongst its contents is a Welshman's prayer for forgiveness for his neglect of the Scriptures hitherto, a prayer that his heart may be humbled *to keep this law*, Morning and Evening Prayer for family worship, Morning and Evening Prayer to be used on Sundays by the head of the family, a Grace before Meat and after Meat, a letter to the reader by Robert Llwyd, Vicar of Y Waun, and an exhortation in English 'To all the Worthy and True-hearted Well-willers and furtherers of the Spiritual weale of Wales who have put their helping hand and hearts to that late, necessary, and worthy worke of Setting forth the Bible in Welsh in a small volume.' The book ends with *The Pronunciation of the Letters in the British Tongue*, and *A Comparison of the Letters in Welsh to the Greeke and Hebrew Letters*. By Edward Kyffin.

**Oliver Thomas** (1598—?), entered as a student at Hart Hall, Oxford, in 1616, and graduated M.A. in 1628, and after leaving the University he became a Presbyterian. His name appears amongst the approvers in the Act for the Propagation of the Gospel in Wales



(1650-1653). He was elected to Llanrhaidr-ym-Mochnant by the Commissioners in 1650, and before 1657 was promoted to some living in Shropshire. He died at Felton in that county. His name is sometimes associated with *Car-wr y Cymru* in 1631; there is, however, no evidence to substantiate that opinion. The only work which bears his name is *Drych i Dri math o Bobl, sef ir Anghristion, Rhith-gristion, a'r Gwir-gristion*, 1647. A second edition of this excellently written work appeared in *Trysor ir Cymru*, in 1677, edited by the Rev. Stephen Hughes.

Another edition of the Book of Common Prayer in Welsh appeared in 1634, and in 1647 another edition of the New Testament. The latter bears neither the name of any editor nor publisher, and it has been thought that it was brought out by the evangelists Vavasor Powell and Walter Cradoc, two early leaders of Nonconformity in Wales.

**Vavasor Powell** (1617-1670) was born at Cnwc-glas, Radnorshire, and educated at Jesus College, Oxford. On the outbreak of the Civil War he left Wales for London, where for two years he preached, and afterwards for two years at Dartford, Kent. In 1646 he was invited to resume his evangelistic work in Wales, where he became known as the 'Metropolitan of the itinerants.' In 1649 he had a prominent share in obtaining the Act for the Propagation of the Gospel in Wales. In the administration of this Act he took a leading part and became the central object of the attacks of its opponents. He published many tracts in reply to their and other criticisms of his work and teaching, but he wrote in English. Several of his works were translated into Welsh, such as his *Scripture's Concord* (1646), his autobiography, and his 'Saving Faith' (Canwyll Crist), etc. The editions of the Welsh New Testament in

1647, and of the whole Bible in 1654, were brought out by Powell and Cradoc.

**Walter Cradoc** (1606?-1659) was born at Trefela, in the parish of Llangwm-ucha in Monmouthshire, *c.* 1606. His home was not far from Llanfaches, and it is probable that he came under the influence of Wroth. He held the curacy of Peterston-under-Ely, and afterwards that of St. Mary's, Cardiff. In 1633 he refused to read *The Book of Sports* which was ordered to be read in the churches. For this he was deprived of his license, but he succeeded in obtaining another curacy at Wrexham, which he held for a year. On his way back to South Wales he stayed for a time at Shrewsbury, where he met Richard Baxter. He found a home for the next four years with the family of Sir Robert Harley in Herefordshire, whence he made preaching tours in the adjacent counties of Wales. In 1639 he went to assist Wroth at Llanfaches, and he eventually succeeded him at that place, but when the Civil War broke out he was obliged to flee. The year 1643 found him in London, established at Great All-Hallows. He returned to Wales in 1646 as an itinerant preacher, and published jointly with Vavasor Powell an edition of the New Testament in 1647, and an edition of the Bible in 1654. He died at his home, Trefela, in 1659, and, according to the *Broadmead Records*, he was buried in the chancel of Llangwm-ucha Church.

He published several works in English. His collected works were published by the Rev. T. Charles of Bala and the Rev. P. Oliver of Chester in 1800.

**William Phylip** (1577-1669), the bard who has just been noticed in connection with Rowland Vaughan of Caer Gai, wrote *Cywydd Marwnad Siarles y Cyntaf*, 1648. He was one of the most devoted of the Welsh royalists,

as we have already seen, and this *cywydd* seems to have been printed and well circulated. After his death, his fellow-bard and kinsman, Phylip Sion Phylip, mentioned it in the *marwnad* he composed to him :

Ei gwyn am Siarls genym sydd  
Yn brintiedig, braint dedwydd ;  
Teilwng oedd, lân ben talaith,  
Yn brint roi'i holl iawn-bur iaith.

William Phylip died in 1669, and was buried at Llanddwywe. He strongly objected to the payment of taxes, and in this connection he wrote the two quaint *englynion* given below :

Am frad i'r holl wlad, wyr hyllion,—a'u trwst,  
Codi treth anghyfion,  
Hwy gânt dâl a gofalon,  
A châs hir o achos hon.

Dyma warant sant dan sêl,—attolwg,  
Telwch yn ddiochel,  
Rhag i'r sant a chwant ni chêl  
Ymgethri a mynd yn Gythrel.

In his *marwnad*, his extreme old age is mentioned by Phylip Sion Phylip. It will be remembered that he himself said he was seventy-two when he met Rowland Vaughan in his wanderings.

Triniodd y byd tra anwir,  
Trwy iawn hap i oedran hir ;  
Mewn glân fuchedd rinweddawl  
Hyd ei fedd, wr hynod fawl.

He left behind him a few poems and carols written in the free metres, and two *marwnadau* composed to the same man, Gruffudd Fychan of Caer Gai, which have appeared in the *Brython*. A few of his *englynion* were also published in the *Greal*.



**John Edwards** (1606—?), 'Sion Tre-Redyn,' a native of Caldecot, was educated at Jesus College, Oxford, which he entered in 1624. He graduated B.A. in 1626 and M.A. in 1629, and became rector of Llanmartin in the same year, and of Tredennoek in 1633, of which he was deprived by the Commissioners under the Act of 1650. At this time he translated Edward Fisher's *Marrow of Modern Divinity* into Welsh. This was a work written in the form of a dialogue between *Evangelista*, who represented a minister of the Gospel; *Nomista*, a strong supporter of the law; *Antinomista*, a man who belittled the law, and *Neophitus*, a young Christian.

His translation appeared under the title *Madruddyn y Difynyddiaeth Diweddaraf*, in 1651, but his Welsh is very clumsy, as he himself admits—'canys nid wyf fi (a anwyd ar lan Hafren ym mro Gwent lle y mae Saesoniaith yn drech na'r Britanniaith) yn cymmeryd arnaf, na medraeth, nac hyspysrwydd yn y Cymraeg, eithr nid bychan yw fy sergh at yr iaith a daioni fyn' gwlad.'

✓ **Richard Jones, M.A.** (1603-1669), of Llanfaircaereinion, was the son of John ap Hugh or Pugh of Hendre-Caerwys. He was a graduate of Jesus College, Oxford. He was appointed to Llanfaircaereinion in 1636, deprived in 1650, and restored in 1661. During his forced idleness, as he says, he published in 1653 *Testun y Testament Newydd*, and in 1655 *Perl y Cymro, neu, Cofiadur y Beibl ar fesurau Psalmiau Dafydd*. Both are summaries of the contents of the books of the Bible in free metric form. The latter contains a commendatory letter by James Howell 'to my reverend and learned Countryman.' Richard Jones died in 1669.

**Morgan Llwyd o Wynedd** (1619-1659) was born at Cynfal, near Festiniog, in 1619. He was sent to school



at Wrexham, where in 1635 he came under the influence of the preaching of Walter Cradoc. The impressions formed then lasted throughout his life, and, fired with a similar enthusiasm, he travelled the length and breadth of his country preaching the Gospel of Christ wherever he could find listeners. In 1649 he was appointed one of the twenty-five Puritans responsible for the administration of the Act passed in that year for the better propagation and preaching of the Gospel in Wales.

His first literary production appeared in 1653, and was entitled *Dirgelwech I rai iw Ddeall, ac i eraill iw Watwar, sef Tri aderyn yn ymddiddan*. This book takes the form of a dialogue between the Eagle, the Dove, and the Raven, who are supposed to represent Cromwell, the Nonconformists, and the Established Church, respectively. The work proves Morgan Llwyd to have been a great master of allegory. It went through several editions, the most recent of which was that produced by the late Mr. T. E. Ellis, M.P., in 1899, under the auspices of the Guild of Graduates of the University of Wales.

His second work, *Llythyr i'r Cymru Cariadus*, was also published about 1653. *Gwaedd Ynghymru yn Wyneb pob Cydwybod Euog* was published about two years later. This went through six editions by 1821. *Gair o'r Gair*, which appeared in 1656, was considered so excellent a work that it was translated into English in 1739 under the title *A Discourse of the Word of God*. In 1657 he published four small works, *Yr Ymroddiad*, *Y Discybl ai Athraw o Newydd*, *Cyfarwyddid i'r Cymru* and *Gwyddor Uchod*. The last of these is a poetical work in which he gives expression to strange views of astronomy, as the following lines illustrate :

Mae ymhob dyn naturiol,  
 Saith Blaned fawr ryfeddol ;  
 Ag yn cydweithio heb nâghau  
 Gida'r Planedau nefol.

Dyn iw Canolfa'r hollfyd,  
 Dyn o bob peth a grewyd.  
 Pob peth a wnaed sydd ynddo ef,  
 Môr, Dayar, Nef a Bywyd.

No less than fifty-two poems, songs, hymns, and *englynion* appear in the first volume of his work edited by the late M.P. for Merionethshire ; the great majority of them are in English, and some of them are very sweet little odes although cast in that vein of seriousness which runs through all Morgan Llwyd's work. The following may be cited as examples of the ease with which he writes *englynion* :

O Meirion dirion i dario—ynddi  
 Yn dda rwi'n dy gofio  
 Nid hawddgar ond ath garo  
 Fy annwyl bresswyl am bro.

Pregethwr, nithiwr a wna—i filioedd  
 Foliannu Jehova  
 Pregethwr os pregetha  
 Holl lais Duw, a wna les da.

Some of the rules he gives for the preservation of health, in his short poem *Iechyd i'r Corph*, are as quaint as they are true, e.g. :

3. A byw megis angel  
 Ac nid fel anifel.
6. Ymgadw rhag afraid  
 A gochel dy lonaid.
9. Bydd fyw mewn llawenydd  
 A deall dy ddefnydd.

14. Yn gyntaf bydd nefol  
Yn ail bydd naturiol.
16. Yn gynnil ymbortha,  
Drwy chwys bwytta fara.
17. A chyfod yn forau  
Di ddiangi rhag angau.
19. Na waria yn ofer  
Un fodfedd oth amser.
20. Ni ddysgo drwy eiriau,  
Caiff ddysg gan ei angau.

But it is rather as a writer of excellent prose than as a poet that he has done his greatest service to his country. His works are masterpieces in style and diction, and, unlike those of Rowland Vaughan and the many other translators of this period, their substance is for the most part original. His influence upon the masses was very great, because all his writings, with the exception of the poems noted above, were in Welsh. They show him in many lights, as a theologian, a philosopher, a careful student of Nature, and an accurate observer of the social and political events of his day.

✓ **James Howell** (1594-1666) was one of the most remarkable Welshmen of the seventeenth century. He was a Brecknockshire man, and was the son of a clergyman named Thomas Howell, curate of Llangammarch, and afterwards Vicar of Abernant in Carmarthenshire. He was educated at Jesus College, Oxford, where in 1623 he was elected a Fellow. In 1626 he became M.P. for Richmond. In 1638 he was appointed secretary to the Earl of Leicester, the British ambassador to the Court of Denmark. On his return he became secretary to the Council in London, but got into debt and was thrown into the Fleet Prison. It was here that he wrote between fifty and

sixty compositions which acquired for him such a reputation that Charles II. in 1660 made him chief historiographer to the Court, a post he held until his death in 1666. He was the author of *Dodona's Grove* and *Familiar Letters*, which are full of quiet humour and show a wide knowledge of the world gained by observation and travel. Quaint examples of them are the letter he wrote to Captain Thomas, which contains a very well told story of the reclamation of a gambler, and that written to Cliffe on wines, in which he touches on the merits and evils of *metheglin*, a bottle of which he enclosed to his friend. He refers to this drink as 'the pure juice of the bee, the laborious bee, and King of Insects,' but he advises caution in its use, for it admitted 'of but one good draught, and that in the morning.'

His most celebrated work was a *Lexicon Tetraglotton* (the four languages being English, French, Italian, and Spanish). One part of this remarkable book is devoted to *Diharebion Cymraeg VVedi ei Cyfieithu yn Saisoneg*. It was published in London in 1658, and was dedicated 'to the Right Honorable, Richard Earl of Carbery.'

✓ **Elis Lewis** of Llwyngwern, Merionethshire, was a gentleman of culture who at the request of Mrs. Catherine Anwyl of Park translated Drexelius' *On Eternity* into Welsh. His translation appeared in 1661 under the title of *Ystyriaethau Drexeliws ar Dragywyddoldeb*. He says in the preface that Oxford scholars had 'edited and corrected' his little book for the benefit of their fellow-countrymen. The work is written in simple and clear Welsh prose, and contains passages of great beauty. Very little is known of the translator except that he was well-connected, for he had married a daughter of Sir John Owen of Clenenau.



**Dr. Edward Wynn** (?—1669) was the son and last heir male of Bodewryd, Anglesey. He married first, Jane, the widow of Dr. John Davies, his predecessor at Llany-mawddwy; and second, Margaret, the daughter of Bishop Robert Morgan of Bangor. He was educated at Jesus College, Cambridge. He held various livings in the diocese of St. Asaph and Bangor, amongst them Llany-mawddwy, of which he was deprived in 1650, and, after the Restoration, Llanllechid, Llangeinwen, and Llaneugrad. He was also a canon of St. Asaph, and chancellor of Bangor, where he is mentioned as having subscribed to the fund for improving the Cathedral. He was an ardent educationist and founded a school at Holyhead, and a bursary at Jesus College, Cambridge, where he himself had been educated. Only one book of his is known to have been published, viz.: *Trefn Ymarweddiad y Gwir Gristion, neu Lwybr hyffordd i'r Cymro i rodio arno beunydd gyda Duw. Gan Edward Wynn, D.D. Llundain, 1662.*

✓ **Richard Jones** (1604-1673), a native of Llansannan, was educated at Balliol College, Oxford, where he graduated M.A. in 1633. He was appointed by the Trustees for the Maintenance of Ministers under Cromwell school-master of Denbigh, a post he held until his death in 1673. He was a man of 'considerable learning and noted piety.' He translated into excellent Welsh Baxter's *Call to the Unconverted*, which he published in 1659 under the title *Galwad i'r Annychweledig*, and another book by the same author which was published by Gouge and Stephen Hughes in 1672, entitled *Amdo i Babyddiaeth*. He also translated for Gouge his *Christian Directions*, which was issued in 1675 under the title of *Hyfforddiadau Christianogol*. He also translated Baxter's *Now or Never*, which was published

in 1677 under the title of *Bellach neu Byth*. All his translations are in idiomatic Welsh.

✓ **Thomas Gouge** (1605-1681) was the son of Dr. William Gouge, Rector of Blackfriars, London. He was born in 1605, and educated at Eton and King's College, Cambridge, where he was elected to a Fellowship which he subsequently exchanged for the living of Colsden near Croydon. After a short stay there, he removed to St. Sepulchre, London, where he laboured strenuously for over twenty years. He was a wealthy and generous man, and his assistance to the many poor in his parish was proverbial. Some of his wealth he employed in inducing the ignorant poor to attend his classes held every morning in the church. He supplied work to many who would undertake it, doling out flax and hemp for them to spin, and paying them generously. This good work was disturbed by the Act of Uniformity of 1662, to which Gouge would not submit, and he resigned his living. London's loss proved a great gain to Wales, where he transferred his educational energy and zeal in 1671. His first visit to this country impressed him with its lack of educational advantages, and the ignorance which prevailed in consequence. He established many schools in different parts, more especially in the towns, and he directed his efforts to secure that the children of the poor should be taught to read and write English, and be carefully grounded in religious principles, and that good books should be circulated to counteract vice. In 1674 Gouge's efforts were supplemented by the establishment of a Welsh Trust for promoting his work on a larger scale. Under the direction of Gouge and supported by Dr. Tillotson, Dean of Canterbury, Benjamin Whichcot, Edward Stillingfleet, Richard Baxter, and many other philanthropists, this Welsh Society

maintained a large number of Charity Schools in North and South Wales. One of the designs of the Welsh Trust was 'the printing and buying of Welsh Books for free distribution among the poor.' For this work Gouge 'enlisted the help of divers of his Reverend Brethren in Wales.' Among these were Stephen Hughes, Charles Edwards, Richard Jones, William Jones, David Jones, and James Owen. These men translated, edited, and contributed original works of great literary merit for this movement, which the Trust published and freely distributed among the poor. Among these the following may be mentioned as examples: *Holl Ddyledswydd Dyn*, 1672, 2000 copies; *Testament Newydd*, 1672, 2000 copies; *Yr Ymarfer i Dduwioldeb*, 1675, 2000 copies; *Hyfforddiadau Christianogol*, 1675, 3500 copies; *Y Bibl*, 1677-8, 8000 copies. The educational work and the free distribution of these devotional books in the Welsh language led to the literary revival of this period. Thomas Gouge died in 1681. The Trust gradually withdrew its labours from Wales to London, where it ultimately led to the foundation of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge in 1698.

✓ **Charles Edwards** (1628—?).—Mr. Ivor James in an article in the *Traethodydd*, 1886, has helped to throw much light on the life of this Welsh writer. He discovered that he was entered as Bible Clerk at All Souls', Oxford, in 1644, when he was sixteen years of age. He was born, therefore, in 1628. It is believed that he received his previous education either at Oswestry or Ruthin.

When Parliament proposed to visit the University in 1648, Charles Edwards was amongst those who opposed their decision, and he was dismissed from All Souls' in June of that year, but in October he was elected to a scholarship



at Jesus College, took his degree, and was made an honorary Fellow. In 1650 he was engaged by the Commissioners of North Wales under the Act for the Propagation of the Gospel in Wales at a salary of sixty pounds per annum, and in 1657 he was admitted to the Rectory of Llanrhaiadr-ym-Mochnant by Cromwell, which he held until the Restoration. In 1660 Bishop George Griffith of St. Asaph took it over, and thus Charles Edwards was deprived of his benefice. Domestic troubles added to his unhappiness at this time. After losing his living he devoted himself to literature. His first book, *Hanes y Ffydd*, was published at Oxford in 1666. It was an original work, and not a translation, as so many productions of this period were. In 1671 a second edition, corrected and augmented, appeared under the title *Y Ffydd Ddi-ffuant. Adroddiad o Helynt y Grefydd Gristianogol er dechreuad y byd hyd yr oes hon, a phrofiad o'i gwirionedd a'i rhinwedd*. The third edition 'with augmentation' appeared in 1677. In this book he showed that he had drunk deeply of the spirit of William Chillingworth's *Religion of Protestants*, but this has not affected the originality of his work.

Dr. L. Edwards, calling attention to a noted passage in the *Ffydd Ddiffuant*, asks: 'Yn awr, ddarllenydd, onid yw y dyfyniad hwn yn profi mai nid dyn cyffredin oedd Charles Edwards? Nid ydym yn tybied fod un sylw mwy dwfndreiddiol na chyffelybiaeth brydferthach yn holl waith Bacon.'

In 1671 Charles Edwards edited and published the second edition of Maurice Kyffin's *Deffyniad Ffydd Eglwys Loegr* under the title *Dad-seiniad Meibion y Daran*, together with Bishop Davies's *Epistol at y Cembru*, and in 1675 he edited and corrected the third edition of Rowland Vaughan's *Yr Ymarfer i Dduwioldeb*. This was pub-



lished by Gouge's Trust. During the same year he corrected for the press the *Hyfforddiadau Christianogol*, a translation by Richard Jones of Denbigh. In 1679 he translated and published Gouge's *Principles of the Christian Religion* under the title of *Gwyddorion y Grefydd Gristianogol*. In 1682 he edited and improved Robert Lloyd's *Llwybr Hyffordd*, and in 1684 the second edition of *Llyfr y Resolusion* which had been translated by Dr. Davies of Mallwyd. In 1686 he published a work in English under the title of *Fatherly Instructions: being Select Pieces of the Writings of the Primitive Christian Fathers, with an Appendix Intituled Gildas Minimus*. The translations were direct from the original Greek and Latin. The last book he published was his own biography, in 1691. He calls it *An afflicted man's testimony concerning his troubles*. A sentence at the end of the book suggests that he gained a livelihood as a bookseller and publisher, after he had been deprived of his living. He says—'The writer hereof hath many British and English books by him to sell.'

✓ **Stephen Hughes** (1622-1688) was another who co-operated in what may be called the Gouge Movement for the enlightenment of the Cymry. Thomas Gouge had lent his powerful personality, his powers of organisation, and his wealth to this movement; Charles Edwards placed his literary powers at its disposal; Stephen Hughes, in addition to his literary powers, possessed the more distinctly Cymric characteristic of burning eloquence, and a missionary zeal which was rivalled by none in this century. He saw the importance of Gouge's movement, and was one of the first to help him, but it shows how well he understood his countrymen, when he proceeded to collect Vicar Prichard's poems and publish them.

He was a Carmarthen man, but nothing is known of his early education. He was presented to the vicarage of Mydrim by the Commissioners for the approbation of public preachers in 1654, and admitted in 1655. He was deprived of his living in 1662, and devoted himself henceforth to his missionary efforts.

Stephen Hughes commenced his literary labours in 1646 by editing and publishing the first part of the works of Rees Prichard. No copy of this part is known to exist. He published the second part in 1659, bearing the title *Rhan o waith Mr. Rees Prichard*, etc. The preface is signed by S. H., March 4, 1657. The third part appeared in 1670. In 1672 the above three parts, together with a fourth part, were published under the title *Gwaith Mr. Rees Prichard, Gynt Ficcer Llanddyfri*, etc., the fourth part having a separate title. The complete work as it left the hands of its first editor was published under the title *Canwyll y Cymru* in 1681, and bound with it generally, although with a separate title, and probably issued separately, there appeared Hughes' translation of a work of Francis Pereaude under the title *Adroddiad Cywir o'r Pethau pennaf ar a wnaeth, ac a ddwedodd Yspryd Aflan yn Mascon yn Burgundy*.

In 1672 with the assistance of Gouge he published another edition of the *Testament Newydd*, reaching to two thousand copies. He also edited R. Holland's *Sail y Grefydd Gristnogawl*, and Richard Jones's *Amdo i Babyddiaeth*, and other small tracts, and issued them in one volume during this year. In the same year appeared *Holl Ddyledsdydd Dyn*, published at the expense of Thomas Gouge, and in 1675 Stephen Hughes added a glossary of the difficult words in *Hyfforddiadau Christianogol*, also the work of Gouge, but translated by Richard Jones, Dinbych.

It is interesting to note that the Bibles which were formerly printed had become so scarce by 1675 that Gouge and Hughes could find no more than twenty for sale in the whole Principality. This spurred them to a renewed effort to bring out another edition, a work in which Archbishop Tillotson assisted. It was issued in 1677-1678, and also contained *Y Llyfr Gweddî Gyffredin, yr Apocrypha, a'r Salmau Cân*. In 1677, Hughes edited and issued a series of tracts in one thick volume entitled *Trysor i'r Cymru*, and very probably he had a share in the editing of other reprints issued that year.

Stephen Hughes collaborated with three others in the translation of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, and the work was issued under his editorship under the title *Taith neu Siwrnai y Pererin, tan Rith neu Gyffelybiaeth Breuddwyd*, in 1688.

Sufficient has been said to give a general idea of the activity of the Gouge movement for the educational and spiritual improvement of Wales. No less than fifteen works had been published by Charles Edwards alone. Gouge died in 1681, and Edwards in 169-?, and Stephen Hughes lived just long enough to see the publication of his translation of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, in 1688. He had prepared for another edition of the Welsh Bible, and after his death, this, to the number of ten thousand copies, was issued in 1690 by his friend David Jones of Llandyssilio, nobly assisted by many supporters of Stephen Hughes, notably Lord Wharton.



## CHAPTER XIV

HUW MORUS (1622-1709) AND EDWARD MORUS (?—1689)

THIS celebrated bard was born at a farmhouse named Pont y Meibion, in Glynceiriog, Denbighshire, in 1622, and he was the third and youngest son of a responsible farmer who lived on his own estate. There is no record to show the nature of his early education. It is generally thought to have been very meagre. He was apprenticed to a tanner at Overton (Owrtyn Madog) in Flintshire, and remained there seven years, at the expiration of which he returned to his old home, where he stayed for the rest of his life assisting his father, and subsequently his eldest brother, with the farm. Judging from the number of his compositions, his work was not very arduous, and the business of the farm made but small inroads upon his time.

Two volumes of his work have been published by the Rev. Walter Davies (Gwallter Mechain) under the title *Eos Ceiriog, sef casgliad o Ber ganiadau H. M. yn ddau lyfr. O gynnulliad a diwygiad W. D.*

These volumes contain 18 *cywyddau*, 129 carols and songs, and 229 *englynion*, and Mr. O. M. Edwards states that there are still many of his sweetest poems unpublished.

Much of his verse was designed to be sung to the harp, and the name of the tune is generally inserted above the song. *Difyrrwch Gwyr Dyfi, Y Ddeilen Werdd, Y Galon*



*Drom*, *Brynie'r Werddon*, *Llafar Haf*, and *Gwledd Angharad*, are amongst the tunes he employed. The first productions of his muse were love-songs, and some of them are particularly bright and vivacious. Take, for example, that entitled *Fy Nghariad i*, from which these lines are quoted :

Fy nghariad i,  
Teg wyt ti,  
Gwawr ragori, lili lawen,  
Bêr winwydden, fwynedd feinwen,  
Y gangen lawen lun ;  
Blode'r wlad,  
Mewn mawrhad,  
Hardd i hymddygiad, nofiad nwyfus,  
Bun gariadus, haelwen hwylus,  
Y weddus, foddus fun ;  
Lloer wiw i gwedd, lliw eira gwyn,  
Yn sydyn rhoes fy serch,  
Ar f'enaïd fain,  
Sydd glir fel glain,  
Rywiog riain irfain yrfa,  
Na chawn ata ddyn ddiana,  
I'w meddu, mwyna merch ;  
Ond, blode rhinwedd croewedd, cred,  
Er teced ydwyt ti,  
Y galon fach  
A gadwa'n iach,  
Pe baet glanach, gwynnach gwenfron,  
Nid a trymion caeth ochneidion  
Dan fy nwyfron i.

The last five lines occur as a refrain throughout the poem, which was meant to be sung to a tune called *Per Oslef*.

His love-poems were addressed to many different maidens, whom he sometimes found occasion to censure as well as to sing their praises. Many have subsequently

tried to imitate him in the lyric metres he employed in these poems, but with little measure of success.

He has shown himself equally powerful as a writer of *marwnadau*. That which he composed on the death of Richard Myddelton or Miltwn of Plas Newydd, Llansilin, will serve as a good illustration. He laments him thus :

Colles y rhai a geres fwya,  
Ber yw byr oes, marw heb hiroes mae y rhai pura.

Rwy'n cario meddwl trwm i'm dwyfron,  
Lle bu llawenydd heb ofalon,  
Nid all calon drom alarus  
Gan anhunedd ganu'n hoenus ;  
Er bod bob dydd mewn difai helynt,  
Trist anianol yw fy nghalon am fy ngherynt ;  
Am un câr heb gymar iddo,  
Aeth i'r ddaear yn rhy gynnar, rwy'n hir gwyno.

Richard Miltwn oedd i henw,  
Yr angel gwyn, eglurwyn, gloew ;  
Canwyll cenedl y Miltwnied,  
Gŵr hoff inni i gorff a'i ened ;  
Mwyna mwynwalch, difalch dyfiad,  
Gwaredd fuchedd llawen gwyredd llawn o gariad ;  
Ni wela i fyth y fath bendefig,  
Amlwg eglur, mawr Greawdwr, mor garedig.

A great nobleman's lament for his dead wife is expressed by him in the following pathetic lines :

Ffarwel garedig wraig foneddig,  
Bendigedig oedd dy gael ;  
Er colli tegwch a diddanwch,  
Doniau Harddwch, mae Duw'n hael ;  
Duw, gwna'n fodlon fy meddylion,  
I'th amcanion doethion di !  
Nid yw ryfedd faint fy anhunedd,  
Dod amynedd, Dâd, i mi !

A dod drugaredd, rhanwr rhinwedd,  
 Yn y diwedd i ni ein dau.  
 A maddeu i'm calon am fy ngwenfron  
 Wych a ffyddlon, ei choffau !

Huw Morus lived in the stirring period of the Civil War between King and Parliament, and it is natural to expect to find some traces of these trying times in his work. His sympathies were entirely Royalist. Two Welsh bards have been noticed who were strong adherents of the monarchy and suffered for their convictions—Rowland Vaughan and William Phylip. Huw Morus was more fortunate in this respect. Strongly Royalist as many of his poems were, he managed so skilfully to conceal his meaning in ambiguous allegories, that he was never suspect, and not until the danger was over, and he revealed their inner meaning, were they rightly understood. Even if some of his intimates had understood them previously, Royalist feeling was so strong in Wales, and especially in North Wales, that he ran little risk of exposure. Revealed in the light which he threw upon them after the Restoration, they betray a satiric humour of a quality unequalled amongst the Welsh bards. For instance, in the allegory entitled *Brwydr y Bwystiflod*, the *Barcud* and the *Cigfran* represent the opposing factions on the Parliamentary side, viz. the Presbyterians and Independents, the *Oen* represents the funds of the Church and the State, the *Mwyalchen* the moderate party, and the *Lhwynog* Cromwell himself. This is how he describes the *Lhwynog* watching a contest between the *Barcud* and the *Cigfran* :

Pan geisiai'r Barcud damaid,  
 A'i winedd nid oedd weiniaid,  
 Fe ymaflai'r Cigfran yn ei geg,  
 Nid da nid teg mo 'u tynged.

Tra'r oedd yr ymdrech rhyngthyn',  
 Mi a welwn Lwynog melyn,  
 O glun i glun heb ronyn braw  
 Yn rhodio draw'n y rhedyn.  
 Ynghysgod perth fe lechai,  
 A'i lygaid fel canhwyllau,  
 Yn hyf gwn fod y Cenaw cam  
 Yn chwerthin am eu pennau.  
 Ar ben ychydig amser  
 Gwedi iddo gael ei bleser,  
 Ni adawai i'r ddau aderyn dig  
 Fe rostiai gig y brasder.  
 Ond pwy yn drist ae drostyn'  
 Pe byddent meirw o newyn,  
 A'i fol yn llawn mewn lloches glyd,  
 Mae'n llawen fyd ar Fadyn.

*Breuddwyd y Bardd* is another allegory of this kind.

With the accession of Charles II. he no longer disguised his meaning in parables, but mentioned several adherents of the Commonwealth by name. He wrote *Marwnad gwŷr Oliver*, which throws much light on the changes wrought in Society during the Commonwealth. He is very satirical about the tinkers who became mayors, and the blacksmiths, weavers, and others of the same class who conducted public worship on Sunday and sat on the magisterial bench on other days :

Rhai a ddywed yn dduwiol mai'r *Gof* sydd ysprydol  
 Ac eraill modd gwrol a ganmol y *Gwydd* ;  
 A rhai sy'n deisyfu y *Crydd* i'w ceryddu,  
 A'r lleill yn moliannu'r *Melinydd*.

There is much humour in his *Cerdd i ofyn Feiol*, which he writes to Mr. Salisbury of Rug on behalf of a certain William ap Roger. After employing two stanzas to eulogise



the owner of Rug, he proceeds to plead the cause of the old violinist :

Canu ar redeg, cwyno'r ydwy  
Tros hen gerddor o Lyndowrdy,  
William Robert wrth i henw,  
Sydd yn cynnig miwsig masw,  
Gore dyn y gweirie danne,  
At bob cynhanedd lon arafedd lwysedd leisie,  
Yn sir y Mwythig, wlad Sasnigedd,  
Pe arhose, aur y fase ar i fysedd.

The hint in the last two lines, that his countrymen lacked in generosity as compared with the Salopians, is cleverly conveyed, without being offensive.

He then goes on to describe the character of the old musician. He had never been dishonest, he was an adept flatterer of human vanities, but he had always been somewhat feather-brained : X

Gŵr penchwiban er yn blentyn,  
Gwyddech arno fod rhyw bendro'n gwyro i goryn.

But these failings must now be excused on the score of his age :

Mae fo rwan yn heneiddio,  
Fe ddarfu'r grym a'r gwres oedd ynddo.

Old age and weakness have incapacitated him from taking his usual allowance of beer without dire results, one of which, alas ! was that his cherished instrument had suffered destruction. Its plight is thus described :

Er bod y cerddor per leferydd  
Yn medru chwalu a chwilio i choludd,  
Mae diffyg anadl yn i ffroene,  
A dwyn i swm o dan i senne ;  
Mi gyffelyba fwa i feiol

I lais lluddedig gwydd ar farrug, gwedd foreuol ;  
 Llesg iawn ydi, llais ci'n udo,  
 Fel llais olwyn, ne lais morwyn ar lesmeirio.  
 Llais hwch ar wynt, llais lli yn hogi,  
 Llais padell bres yn derbyn defni,  
 Llais hen gath yn crio am lygod,  
 Tiwnie diflas tan y dafnod ;  
 Oer i pharabl yw'r offeryn,  
 Yn llefaru, gwycha ganu, i gychod gwenyn ;  
 Ni chlywyd gwraig erioed yn grwgnach,  
 Ped fae'n gruddfan ne'n ystylian, anwastatach.

The result is that the old minstrel is very unwelcome everywhere—

Haws nag ennill cenig wrthi  
 O fewn y plwy gael dwy am dewi—

and his livelihood is gone ; and the bard ends his poem by imploring the owner of Rug to have compassion upon him :

Mae'ch calon hael am fael i filoedd,  
 A'ch dwy ddwylo'n llwyddo lluoedd,  
 Mwyn gorff gwrol, a thrugarog,  
 I gyd ydych, a godidog ;  
 Rhowch er dyn, blodeuyn Cymru,  
 Ymwared reioli iddo, feiol i'w ddiotalu,  
 Ac ynte a haedde i rwymo i heddwch,  
 Rhag iddo i llethu, mae'n hawdd i gyrru i anhawddgarwch.

In another humorous poem he extols the work of the blacksmith, showing how many other occupations are dependent upon him :

Y *Turner*, a'r *Cooper*, a'r *Sadler* a sai',  
 Y Gwydrwr mewn balchder, a'r *Tiler* pen tai,  
 Ni enilliant fawr arian, ond truan yw'r tro,  
 Heb ddur ac heb haiarn a chenad y Go'.  
 Y Barcer, a'r Glwfer, a'r Cwrier, a'r Crydd,  
 Y Tailiwr, a'r Pannwr, a'r Gwauwr mewn gwydd,

Yr Eurych, a'r Cobler, yn fongler a fo,  
Ni wnant hwy mo'r gwyρθiau, byth gartre', heb waith Go'

He wrote four poems called *Cerddi Tiroedd y Taerion* in defence of a family which had been deeply wronged in connection with a will to which the signature of the testator had been forged by the diabolic device of guiding the dead person's hand. When the bard heard of it, his indignation knew no bounds, and he gave them a castigation in verse with which the whole neighbourhood resounded. He traced the sin of covetousness and its effects throughout the pages of the Old Testament, mentioning Eve, the sons of Jacob, Achan, Ahab and Jezebel, Haman, and others in whose lives it was exemplified; and in a vivid touch of imagination he conceived the bells of Ruabon, in which neighbourhood the deed happened, as ringing of themselves at midnight in horror at the crime. The two verses which follow are quoted from the second of these poems :

Yng nghantref Maelor, cyngor caeth,  
Y gwnaed y pechod, syndod saeth,  
Trwy weniethus dafod ffraeth,  
Ac yspryd gwaeth yn gweithio ;  
Nid mawr synwyr oedd i'w gap,  
Er bod mor hwylus ar ei hap,  
Ar sylwedd drwg y seiliodd drap  
i'w dripio.

Swydd y Waun,<sup>3</sup>hen orsedd wych,  
Sylfaenwch, sefwch ar le sych,  
A chym'rwch Faelor i chwi'n ddrych,  
A rhybudd clych Rhiwabon ;  
Chwi gewch weled cyn bo hir,  
Os ydyw'r Scrythyr lân yn wir,  
Rhyw arwydd tost o herwydd tir  
y Taerion.

Huw Morus was also a prolific writer of carols, more especially Christmas carols, requests for which came to him from all parts of the country. They show the workings of a devotional mind and one well versed in the Scriptures. He lamented the disregard of Christmas which had crept in under the Commonwealth, in one of the best-known of his carols—‘Carol Gwyliau a wnaed yn amser rhwysg Oliver.’ In it he says :

Yn anghof gollyngwyd yr amser y ganwyd  
Oen hyfryd, wiw Brophwyd y brif-ffordd.  
Fe a'r Meistr bonheddig, mor fwyn yn ei fenyg,  
I weithio'r Nadolig, drwy chwithig drwch wedd ;  
Ar ol hynny flwyddyn ni wna efe un gronyn,  
Ond eiste'n wr gerwin, a gorwedd.

Even in his eightieth year he had not tired of composing these sacred odes. At the end of one of them he says :

Os gofyn dyn duwiol  
Pwy luniodd y carol  
O fawl i Dduw nefol,  
Orseddol ei swydd ;  
Hen ddyn a phen maban,  
A'i awen yn fechan,  
A'i gorph yn oer egwan ar ogwydd.)

So far, the poems that have been noticed were written in the free metres, but he also wrote a number of *cywyddau* and *englynion* which showed that he had mastered the *cynghaneddion*. The following lines are taken from his elegy to Sir Thomas Mostyn and Lady Mostyn, who were buried in the same grave at Eglwys y Rhos, in Creuddyn :

Oer i eryr hir aros,  
O'i lys rhydd yn Eglwys Rhos ;  
.  
.  
.  
.



Angeu a'i rhoes, ing yr hawg,  
 A'i arf erchyll ar farchawg ;  
 A'i Arglwyddes wawr Gloddaith,  
 I ran Duw aent i'r un daith ;  
 Ni ddymunodd i'w maenol,  
 Aeres wych, aros o'i ol ;  
 Gado i fonedd gydfyned,  
 A wnaeth Crist am wenith cred ;  
 Un foddion yn fyw oeddynt,  
 Un gred goel, un gariad gynt ;  
 Un galon union, un air,  
 Un ddaioni 'n ddi-anair.

As was stated at the outset, he wrote also a very large number of *englynion*, of which the following may be taken as fair examples :

Bore Gaeaf.

Tew glog sydd hyd dai y Glyn—gwêr awyr  
 Yn go-rewi'r dyffryn ;  
 Cnwd barrug hyd gnawd Berwyn  
 Yn hulyn a gwedd halen gwyn.

In praise of Edward Morus as a translator he wrote :

Y deallwr da i wyllys—diysgog,  
 Di wisgaist yn drefnus  
 Degan iaith, di-graith i grys,  
 Da i rad mawr, Edward Morus.  
 Llyfr annerch, llafur enaid,—llawenydd  
 A lluniaeth ffyddloniaid ;  
 Lluddio'n rhwysg, llaw Dduw i'n rhaid,  
 A all agor ein llygaid.

In his last illness, in reply to a friend who made inquiries as to his condition, he said :

Myn'd i'r ail adail ar redeg—yr wyf,  
 Lle ceir oes ychwaneg,

I baradwys bur wiwdeg,  
Yn enw Duw yn union deg.

He died at the advanced age of 87, in August 1709, and was buried at Llansilin, where the two following *englynion*, composed by the Rev. Robert Wynn, Vicar of Gwyddelwern, were inscribed on his tomb :

Dyma Huw fu byw yn y byd—yn bencerdd  
Ar byngciau celfyddyd,  
Gwir organ y gân i gyd,  
Diammeu yw—dyma Ovyd.

Er Groegiaid, blaeniaid, aer blys—iawn naddiad  
Awenyddiaeth fedrus,  
Lladinwyr ledwŷr di lys,  
Hwya mawredd Huw Morus.

Huw Morus has been ranked with Dafydd ab Gwilym in the quality of his muse, and in his power of imagination and versatility. Mr. R. I. Prys, writing of these two great bards, says with much truth : ‘Ychydig iawn o feirdd Cymru sy’n deilwng i gael eu rhestri yn yr un dosparth aruchel a hwynthwy, o ran crebwyll, darfelydd, ac amledd eu cyfansoddiadau awenyddol. Y gwir yw, mai rhai wedi eu *geni* yn feirdd a llenorion oedd y ddau, ac nid rhai wedi eu saernïo gan ddysg a chelfyddyd.’ Poetry seemed to flow easily and naturally from Huw Morus ; it was not the result of effort, but of inspiration.

**Edward Morus** (?—1689) also belongs to the seventeenth century, but his poems were not published until the eighteenth—eleven of them in the *Carolau a Dyriau Duwiol* in 1720, and ten others in the *Blodeugerdd*, 1779. Very little is known of this bard except that he lived at Perthi Llwydion, Cerrig y Druidion, in Denbighshire.

Huw Morus mourned him in a *Cywydd Marwnad*, in which he states that he died in Essex in 1689 :

Dau wyth gant, meddant i'n mysg,  
Pan gladdwyd pen goleuddysg ;  
Wyth ddeg a naw, a theg nod,  
Oed Iesu wedi' osod ;  
Daear Essex, dir isod,  
Ydyw beddle, claddle clod.<sup>1</sup>

These two bards, who had no compeers in the period in which they lived, seemed to appreciate each other's work, for Edward Morus wrote an *englyn* to greet his brother bard, as follows :

Huw Morus felus fyw alarch—barod,  
Burwr cerdd gywreinbarch ;  
Anerchion cofion cyfarch,  
I'th wyneb pur, ddoeth enw parch.

To which Huw Morus replied in a series of *englynion*, one of which reads :

Mawr Athro'n eilio, anwylyd—miloedd,  
Melin y gelfyddyd,  
Melin dda'n malu'n ddiwyd,  
Malu'r gerdd mal aur i gyd.

Edward Morus composed several carols, in which he seems to excel. In *Carol yr Haf* he addresses the Summer in the following beautiful lines :

Can diolch, Haf perffaith, tydi yw 'nghydymaith  
I dramwy at loer odiaeth, bydd helaeth a haws ;  
Mewn llwybrau mawr meithion dy ddyddiau sydd hirion,  
I gyrchu at liw'r hinon, loer hynaws.

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<sup>1</sup> *Eos Ceiriog*, i. 26.

Pan ddel 'y ngwawr hoewen dan gwrr y ffurfafen,  
 Y bore mor burwen yn llawen o'i llys,  
 I rodio'r Haf tirion, cyfarcha di Wenfron  
 Ar ddolydd glan afon glyn nwyfus.

He is very happy in this class of poem and seems to have the gift of blending Nature and Love in perfect harmony.

The lofty moral tone of some of his odes is very impressive. An example of this is found in his *Cywydd yn erbyn Meddwdod*, in which, by pointing out its serious physical and mental effects, he hopes to entice his countrymen to the paths of sobriety. He writes :

Pwy a ddengys a'i fys fai  
 Mwy na gwendid mewn gwindai ;  
 Y mân defyrn yma'n difa  
 A byw ar dwyll, heb air da.

The miserable excuse so often given for drunkenness, he describes in the couplet :

Cyfeillach drwy afiach dro  
 A fu'r esgus i frwysgo ;

while its effects upon mind and body are well summarised in the lines :

Pylu'r co trwy ango trwm,  
 Bodd rhusol boddi rheswm ;  
 Dinistrio'r corff a'i orffen,  
 Dallu pwyll dyall y pen.

His delineation of animals gives the impression of one who thoroughly understood them. If it is true that he was a drover, this is at once explained. In *Cywydd y Tarw* he describes the bull thus :

Crych leisiwr a rhodiwr rhydd  
 Cryg ym min craig y mynydd ;



Pur feudwy mewn porfa-dir,  
Meillion, gwellt a hydd-wellt hir.

And in *Cywydd y Paun*, which gives a fine representation of that stately but unmusical bird, the following lines occur :

Paun waredd glod, penwyrdd glân,  
Pryd angel parod yngan ;  
Llais cythrel, rhyfel yr hin,  
Llwydrudd, a chamrau lleidrin ;  
A gwddw gwâg, gweiddi o'i go,  
O flaen dryc-hin flin drwcio ;  
Draig laswerdd yn drwg leisiaw,  
Draig yn gloch dyrogan glaw.

Some of his poems betray his ardent love for his native tongue, and his alertness to events which made for its preservation, or otherwise. He wrote a *cywydd* to Bishop Lloyd of St. Asaph, ' yn rhoddi y gostyngedig ddiolch am ei ddirfawr serch tuag at yr iaith Gymraeg,' and his gratitude for the appointment of the patriotic Welshman, Bishop Humphreys of Bangor, who was granted the see by William III., was well expressed in a series of *englynion*, of which the following is one :

Gŵr o'n gwlad, gariad geirwir,—gorau ddawn,  
Gŵr i Dduw sy gywir ;  
Gŵr o'n hiaith i'w garu'n hir,  
Ag o'n ffydd a ganffyddir.

Edward Morus also translated Rawlet's *Christian Monitor* into good Welsh prose. This was published in 1689 under the title of *Rhybuddiwr Cristnogawl*, and reprinted many times in the two succeeding centuries.

Elis Wyn o Lasynys,  
 A'i groen yn wynnach na'i grys.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE CHIEF PROSE WRITERS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

**Elis Wyn o Lasynys** (1671-1734) was the only son of Edward Wynne, who had married the heiress of Las Ynys, ✓ a small mansion near Harlech, where he was born in 1671. He matriculated March 1, 1692, at Jesus College, Oxford, aged 21. He was ordained Deacon October 24, 1704, and Priest December 31, 1704, by the Bishop of Bangor, and on January 1, 1705, was preferred to the living of Llandanwg, and in 1711 to Llanfair. He thus spent the whole of his life in his native place. Hewas twice married—first, in 1698, to Lowri Wynne, of Moel y Glo, near Harlech, who died in the following year; and afterwards, in 1702, to Lowri Llwyd, of Hafod Lwyfog, Beddgelert, by whom he had numerous issue. He died in 1734, and was buried beneath the altar of his church at Llanfair.

In 1701 he published a translation of *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living*, by Bishop Jeremy Taylor, under the title *Rheol Buchedd Sanctaidd*. It was dedicated to ✓ Humphrey, Bishop of Bangor, and in addition to an excellent preface by the author, it contained some eulogistic *englynion* composed by Edmund Prys, Vicar of Clynog, and some Latin lines by Ffoulk Price, of Llanllyfni.

In 1703, the work which secured his literary reputation was published, under the title *Gweledigaethu y Bardd* ✓

*Cwsc*. Thirty editions of this work and two translations into English have already appeared.

In 1710 Elis Wyn issued a revision of the *Llyfr Gweddi Gyffredin*, with the approval of the four Welsh bishops and of Bishop Humphreys, who had now been translated to Hereford. In this book first appeared the well-known hymn *Myfi yw'r Adgyfodiad Mawr*, of which he was the author.

A work translated and published by his son, Edward Wynne, in 1755, entitled *Prif Addysc y Cristion*, contained a brief exposition on the Catechism, private and family prayers, and a few hymns and carols by Elis Wyn. His metrical translation of Psalm cxlviii. was published in the *Trysorfa Gwybodaeth* in 1770.

It was his chief work, *Gweledigaethu y Bardd Cwsc*, that raised him to the highest pinnacle amongst prose writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. There is no doubt that he meant that work to have consisted of two parts, for on the title-page of *Y Bardd Cwsc* appears the legend *Y Rhann Gyntaf*. As this contains the three visions entitled *Gweledigaeth Cwrs y Byd*, *Gweledigaeth Angeu yn ei Frenhinllys isa*, and *Gweledigaeth Uffern*, it is surmised that the second part would have been the anti-thesis to this, and would have borne such a title as *Gweledigaeth y Nefoedd*, but it was never written, although Elis Wyn lived for thirty years after the publication of the first part.

Perhaps he felt he could not do justice to so great a theme, and he might have profited by the experience of writers in other languages, who undertook similar themes, and had been as unsuccessful in their efforts to describe human life perfected, as they were successful in depicting it in its fallen state, and the future consequences of sin, as they conceived them to be.

The question of the amount of original work contained in the *Bardd Cwsc* has been treated with great care in Professor Morris Jones's Introduction to his edition of that work.

In 1649 there had been published at Madrid a book entitled *Sueños* (Visions) by a Spaniard named Quevedo. In 1667 an English translation of this was published by Sir Roger L'Estrange, and proved so popular that it ran through four editions. It was not quite a literal translation, but was altered in some parts so as to adapt it to English tastes. This book had evidently come into Elis Wyn's hands, and he in turn adapted it to suit his own countrymen, but he did far more than this. Whereas Quevedo's work and L'Estrange's translation had contained seven visions, Elis Wyn contented himself with three, the fifth (*The Vision of the World*), the second (*The Vision of Death and her Empire*), and the sixth (*The Vision of Hell*).

He borrowed, it is true, a few of his ideas from L'Estrange ; for example, the person who practised the gracious smile before the mirror, the hypocritical grief displayed at the funerals, and some of the characters that appear in his work. But, on the whole, there is little more than a tithe of the work that is not original, as far as its comparison with ✓ Quevedo and L'Estrange goes.

Quevedo himself had not been original in his conception of the visions. There are several pre-Christian works known, describing man's visits to the under-world, including those by classical writers, and the Middle Ages added their contribution to this kind of literature.

Elis Wyn saw in them a convenient vehicle in which to convey his thoughts to his countrymen, and to point out a few weaknesses and vices which, though not particularly



theirs, were common to the whole human race, and as unworthy as they were common. He may be said to have changed the character of Quevedo's work entirely, for where the Spaniard employed humour, Elis Wyn assumes a tone almost terrible in its earnestness.

None of his successors except, perhaps, Goronwy Owen could write such pregnant prose as he. His style is remarkably free from English idioms, loose expressions, and superfluities. He has at his command a number of strong words and phrases, each of which is capable of delineating a whole idea, and some of them take such a strong hold upon the imagination that they haunt the reader long after he has laid the volume aside, even as they did the mind of Goronwy Owen, who was a great admirer of the *Bardd Cwsc*, and consciously or unconsciously used some of its expressions to adorn the lines of his noblest poem. The affinity of taste between the great prose writer and the poet is scarcely to be wondered at, for Goronwy was himself an excellent prose writer, and Elis Wyn, although he wrote little poetry, as far as we know, except the four odes which form part of his *Bardd Cwsc*, and a few hymns and carols, was by nature a child of the muse, and in every page of his great prose classic can be traced the impress of a poetic mind.

**Edward Samuel** (1674-1748), the Vicar of Bettws Gwerfil Goch, was born in 1674, in Penmorfa, Carnarvonshire. He was educated at Oriel College, Oxford, where he matriculated 19th May 1693, and was ordained Deacon 9th August 1695, and Priest 1st October 1697, by Dr. Humphreys, Bishop of Bangor, and in 1702 preferred to the above living, which he held until 1721, when he removed to Llangar, where he died in 1748. He is best known as a translator. The only original work he com-

posed, apart from his few poems, was that entitled *Bucheddau'r Apostolion a'r Efangylwyr*, 1704.

*Gwirionedd y Grefydd Grist'nogol*, 1716, a translation from the Latin of Hugh Grotius, is one of our Welsh classics. The late Dr. Silvan Evans edited the third edition published in 1854.

In 1718 appeared *Holl Ddyledswydd Dyn*, and in 1722 *Prif Ddledswyddau Christian*, the translation of a work by Bishop Beveridge, urging the necessity and benefits of common prayer. In 1723, under the same title, a work by the same author on the importance of frequent Communion was translated and published by Edward Samuel.

In 1731 he translated the first part of Dr. Peter Nourse's work *Athrawiaeth yr Eglwys, Y Rhan Gyntaf*, together with *Gweddiau i Deuluoedd*, from the original of Archbishop Wake. In the same year he published a sermon entitled *Pregeth ynghylch Gofalon Bydol*, which he had preached at the funeral of the Rev. Robert Wynne, Vicar of Gwyddelwern.

✓ Edward Samuel was a bard as well as a prose writer. Five of his poems are found in the *Blodeugerdd*, and besides these he wrote an elegy upon the well-known bard Huw Morus, to whom he referred as :

Aneddwr awenyddiaeth  
Gorau ei gerdd o Geiriog aeth.  
Swrth oedd ei fynd, syrthiodd fo  
Drwy oer ing i dir ango.<sup>1</sup>

**David Lewis**, Curate of Llanllawddog, and Llanfihangel, Rhos-y-corn, Carmarthenshire, and afterwards Vicar of Llangatwg, Glamorganshire, edited and published Dr. John Davies' *Flores Poetarum Britannicorum sef Blodeuog*

<sup>1</sup> *Hanes Llenyddiaeth Gymreig*, p. 124.

*Waith y Prydyddion Brytannaid* in 1710. He also published several works of his own, the chief being *Golwg ar y Byd, yn Cynnwys briwsion oddiar fyrddau y dysgedigion, ac yn dangos gallu, doethineb, a daioni Duw*, etc. It is very well written and of exceptional interest as a work on natural science, and the application of the argument from design in creation. The first edition appeared in 1725, and the second in 1825.

**Edward Llwyd** (1660-1709), the greatest Celtic scholar of this era, and the precursor of modern scientific and comparative philology, whose great work *Archæologia Britannica* appeared in 1707, was the son of Edward Llwyd of Llanforda, Oswestry. He was educated at Jesus College, Oxford. His University conferred an honorary degree of M.A. on him in 1701, and he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1708 in recognition of his great contributions to philology and to natural science. The appearance of the *Archæologia Britannica* marks a new epoch in the history of Welsh philology. A profound knowledge of the Celtic languages, a critical spirit far in advance of his time, and a remarkably modern scientific method of treatment, are apparent in every page of this monumental work. By his comparative method of treatment he discovered Grimm's law more than a century before Grimm formulated it. Llwyd's contributions to natural science and archæology are equally significant and important. His published works are very numerous and scattered, but much remains in manuscript. He was a great collector of manuscripts, and his services to literature in this field alone were very great. He died in 1709, a poor man but highly respected for his learning and honesty, and although his countrymen failed to appreciate the significance of his work during his time, and for more than



a century after his death, modern scholarship has fully re-established his claims to be esteemed as the pioneer of modern philology in Britain.

**Moses Williams** (1686-1742), the Vicar of Defynog, in Brecknockshire, was the son of a clergyman, and was born in 1686, in Cardiganshire. He was educated at Carmarthen Grammar School, and afterwards at Oxford, which he left in 1708, and was ordained at St. James's, Westminster, 1709. In 1715 he obtained the living of Llanwenog, in 1716 Defynog, and in 1732 the rectory of Chilton Trinity and the vicarage of St. Mary's, Bridgewater. He died in 1742.

He translated several devotional books, but wrote rather inferior Welsh, especially in his first efforts.

In 1711 two of his translations were published, viz. *Llaw-lyfr y Llafurwr*, and *Ymarferol-Waith i'r Elusen-Ysgolion*.

In 1715 he translated the *Companion to the Altar*, a work which, judging from the number of editions it went through, was very much appreciated by his countrymen. A better translation was, however, published in 1762 by a writer signing himself L. E.

In 1717 he issued an interesting list of books which had either been composed in Welsh, or translated into Welsh. It was very imperfect, but he was the first to make an effort which was afterwards carried out more accurately and methodically by Gwilym Lleyl and Silvan Evans.

In 1717-18 another edition of *Y Bibl Cyssegr-lan* was issued under his supervision. The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge was responsible for its publication. Some copies contained the Book of Common Prayer, and in others it was omitted.

In 1726 his *Repertorium Poeticum*, an alphabetical list



of Welsh poetry contained in manuscripts, giving the first line of each poem, appeared. This was, perhaps, his most important work. It had certainly involved great labour and research. And in 1731 he published a second edition of *Britannicæ Descriptionis Commentariolum*, etc., by Humphrey Llwyd.

In 1730, in conjunction with Dr. Wotton, who died before the completion of the work, he published the Laws of Howel Dda under the title *Cyfreithjeu Hywel Dda ac eraill, seu Leges Wallicæ Ecclesiasticæ et Civiles Hoeli Boni et Aliorum Walliæ Principum*.

✓ W. M., B.A., are the initials of the translator of Thomas à Kempis' *De Imitatione Christi* from the original into plain, vigorous, and idiomatic Welsh. This was published in 1723 under the title *Patrwym y Gwir-Gristion: neu Ddilyniad Iesu Grist*. The *Imitation* is one of the great books of the world, and the translation of W. M. is second to none of its innumerable translations as a work of art. It has been surmised that W. M., B.A., was the Rev. William Morgan, B.A., the Curate of Penmynydd, and afterwards Rector of Llanddeusant, Anglesey. He was ordained Deacon in 1696 and Priest in 1698 by Bishop Humphreys, the great patron of Welsh literature at this period. His name appears in the list of subscribers in *Difyrrwch Crefyddol*, 1721, as 'Curate of Penmynydd.' He was collated to Llanddeusant in 1732, and died in 1742. He was a *prydydd* of considerable attainments as well as a prose writer of the first rank, if the *Patrwym* can be proved to be his work.

Griffith Jones of Llanddowror (1684-1761) was born at Cilrhedyn, Carmarthenshire, in 1684, and was educated at the Grammar School at Carmarthen. He was ordained in 1708, and in 1711 received the living of Llandeloi,

Abercowyn. Five years later he was appointed by Sir John Phillips of Picton to the vicarage of Llanddowror. He died at Llacharn in 1761, and was buried at Llanddowror.

Believing that ignorance was 'the mother and nurse of impiety,' as he states in a letter to one of his friends, the main work of his life was devoted to the establishment of what were known as the *Circulating Schools* which were started by him in 1730. In seven years he had founded thirty-seven schools, 'several of them having two, and some three masters, who are obliged to keep a methodical list of the names, places of abode, ages, quality, calling and condition in the world, dispositions and manners, progress in learning, etc., of all the men, women, and children that are taught by them.' (Extract from one of his letters, dated March 10, 1738.)

Sir John Phillips of Picton, his brother-in-law, and the pioneer of the Charity School movement in Wales, and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, encouraged and assisted him with laudable zeal, and later Madam Bevan of Llacharn became his chief supporter in this noble work. The spread of the movement was remarkable. In less than thirty years the number of the schools increased to 3,395, and the number of scholars of all ages to 158,238.<sup>1</sup>

This movement was of incalculable benefit in preserving the Welsh language, for it was one of the main objects of the schools to teach the reading of the Scriptures and other devotional books, in Welsh.

Griffith Jones had his detractors, even in his own day, and notable amongst them was the Rev. John Evans, of Eglwys Gymmun, a near neighbour of the great educationalist. In 1752 this clergyman published an English tract, the nature of which is clearly shown in its title—

<sup>1</sup> *Hanes Llenyddiaeth Gymreig*, p. 129.

*Some Account of the Welch Charity Schools; and of the Rise and Progress of Methodism in Wales, through the Means of them, under the Sole Management and Direction of Griffith Jones, Clerk, Rector of Llanddowror, in Carmarthenshire, in a short History of the Life of that Clergyman as a Clergyman.*

The works published by Griffith Jones are a sufficient refutation of the above charge. They consisted almost entirely of treatises on religious subjects, and were very closely linked with the movement to which he devoted his life.

In 1738 he published *Galwad at Orseddfaingc y Gras*, and in 1740 another part of the same work entitled *Hyfforddwr at Orseddfainc y Gras*. The first part was a kind of catechism showing the value of prayer, and the second contained numerous prayers for various occasions. In 1741 he published the first part of his *Hyfforddiad i Wybodaeth jachusol o Egwyddorjon a Dyledswyddau Crefydd*; the second was issued in 1743, and the third, fourth, and fifth parts appeared in 1746. In 1748 these were collected and published under the title of *Drych Difinyddiaeth*. In 1747 he issued a small English tract bearing the title *Twenty Arguments for Infant Baptism*.

The most popular of his books was undoubtedly the *Drych Difinyddiaeth*, which went through four editions, the third and fourth of which were entitled *Esboniad byr ar Gatecism yr Eglwys*. He shared in moving the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge to publish two editions of the Scriptures in Welsh—one in 1746, and the other in 1752. These editions were brought out under the supervision of Richard Morris, chief clerk in the Navy Office.

As a prose writer, Griffith Jones was verbose, and he



wrote long, complicated sentences, but there is no mistaking the dignity and sincerity of his utterances. One of the thoughts predominant in them is the near approach of the Judgment.

He also produced some verse, but it is not of much merit. In 1743 he issued *Crynodeb y Salmau Canu*, and in 1745 he published *Cerdd Sion: sef, Traethawd ynghylch Moli Duw mewn Salmau, a Hymnau, ac Odlau ysprydol*, and also *Hymnau Detholedig*, and he edited in 1749 a book entitled *Pigion Prydyddiaeth Pen-Fardd y Cymry*, a selection from the songs and hymns of Vicar Prichard of Llanddyfri.

**James Davies** (1648-1722), otherwise known as *Iago ab Dewi*, was born at Llandyssul in 1648. He lived for some time at Pencadair, in Carmarthenshire, and afterwards at Llanllawddog, in the same county, where he died in 1722.

He is best known as the translator of numerous religious works. In 1714 he published a translation entitled *Llythyr Edward Wells, D.D., at Gyfaill ynghylch y Pechod mawr o gymmeryd Enw Duw yn ofer*, and *Cyfeillach beunyddiol â Duw yn Gynddelw neu Ensampl ym Muchedd Sanctaidd Armele Nicholas*. In 1717 appeared *Meddylieu neilltuol ar Grefydd*. This was an excellent translation of a book by Bishop Beveridge; and in the same year he gave to his countrymen one of Matthew Henry's works, which he entitled *Catechism o'r Scrythur, yn Nhrefn Gwŷr y Gymmanfa*. One of the charges brought against Griffith Jones by John Evans of Eglwys Gymmun was that he used this Catechism in his schools.

In 1719 he translated one of Bunyan's booklets, which he entitled *Tyred a Groesaw at Iesu Grist*, and this proved very popular.

*Iago ab Dewi* was also a bard, and several fragments of



his works have been published. Some of his *englynion* are found at the end of Morgan Llwyd's *Gwaedd Ynghymru*, 1750, and other poems were printed in *Blodau Dyfed*, 1824, and in a collection of verses by Peter Evans in the *Awenydd*,<sup>1</sup> published at Carnarvon.

**Theophilus Evans** (1693-1767) was born at Pen-y-wenallt, near Newcastle-Emlyn, in Cardiganshire, in 1693. He came of a family which had been deeply attached to the Royalist cause in the time of the Civil War, and his grandfather, Captain Evan Griffith Evans, suffered imprisonment at Cardigan for some time under the Commonwealth, but that did not abate his zeal, for he named his son, the father of the author of *Drych y Prif Oesoedd*, Charles, after the unfortunate king to whom he had been so devoted.

It is uncertain where Theophilus Evans was educated. The choice seems to lie between Shrewsbury and Carmarthen. Most of his works were printed at the former place, but he mentions that he had permission to use the library at the great school there, probably during the time his books were going through the press, and the editor of the last edition of his *magnum opus* thinks that such permission would have been unnecessary in the case of an old boy. Carmarthen had an excellent grammar school, which was only a few miles from his home. Many noted men of the period had been educated there, amongst them Griffith Jones of Llanddowror and Moses Williams, who was afterwards Theophilus Evans's vicar and the author of *Llawlyfr y Llafurwr* in 1711. He might, indeed, have met both these men at Carmarthen, for they were only his seniors by a few years.

Wherever he was educated, he had acquired a good

<sup>1</sup> *Hanes Llenyddiaeth Gymreig*, p. 142.

working knowledge of Latin, and a taste for literature for the rest of his life.

In 1717 he was ordained by Bishop Ottley of St. David's to the curacy of Defynog under Moses Williams, who had also, as we have mentioned, interested himself in Welsh literature.

In 1722 he was appointed Vicar of Llandyfriog, a place not far from his old home. He resigned that living in 1728 upon his preferment to Llanynys, in Brecknockshire, which he held with the perpetual curacy of Llanddulas, in the same county. Llanwrtyd formed part of his parochial cure, and he is said to have benefited largely by taking the waters at that place, in defiance of the local tradition that they were poisonous, when suffering from an illness during his stay there. Thus were their virtues discovered.

In 1738 he resigned the living of Llanynys, and was preferred to Llangamarch, and in the following year to St. David's, Llanfaes, Brecon, two livings which he held jointly until 1763. These pluralities necessitated the assistance of a curate, and in 1740 William Williams of Pantycelyn was appointed to Llanwrtyd, but had to leave in 1743 because he had come under the influence of that revival in which Howell Harris and Rowlands of Llangeitho were such prominent figures, and the young curate failed to keep within the ecclesiastical bounds to which he had been licensed.

Theophilus Evans died in 1767, and was buried at Llangamarch.

His publications were very numerous, and appeared in the following order :

- (1) In 1715, *Cydwybod y Cyfaill Gorau ar y Ddaear*, a translation of three sermons by Henry Stubbs. This was his first effort, and he apologises for it,

saying that he had only begun to read Welsh with any pleasure for the last three months before its publication.

- (2) *Galwedigaeth ddifrifol i'r Crynwyr, i'w gwahawdd hwy i ddychwelyd i Grist'nogaeth.* No date is assigned to this, but it was probably published in 1715.
- (3) 1716. The first edition of *Drych y Prif Oesoedd*. The second edition, considerably enlarged, of *Drych y Prif Oesoedd* appeared in 1740.
- (4) 1719. *Cydymddiddan Rhwng Dau Wr yn ammau ynghylch Bedydd Plant.* This was a translation of a work by the Rev. W. Wâl, Vicar of Shoreham, in Kent.
- (5) 1722. *Prydferthwch Sancteiddrwydd yn y Weddi Gyffredin*, a translation of four sermons of the work of the Rev. Dr. Bisse.
- (6) 1733. *Pwyll y Pader; neu, Eglurhad ar Weddi'r Arglwydd*, a translation of a work by O. Blackall. This book was dedicated to Sir Sackville Gwynn of Glan Brân.
- (7) *Gwth i Iuddew.* Neu Bregeth, i. Yn rhoddi Hanes Pobl yr Iuddewon. ii. Pa mor ysgeler ddynion oeddent. iii. Pa fodd y gorddiweddodd Barn gyfiawn Duw hwy. This work is undated, but it was published before 1738.
- (8) *Y Gwir Ddoethineb, neu Bregeth*, etc.
- (9) 1740. *Llythyr Addysg Esgob Llundain at y Bobl o'i Esgobaeth; yn eu rhybuddio yn erbyn Claiarwch o'r naill du; a zel danbaid nid ar ol Gwybodaeth, o'r tu arall.*
- (10) 1747. *Drych y Dyn Maleisus. Pregeth.*



- (11) 1752. *The History of Modern Enthusiasm*, an attack on the Revival. Second edition, do., 1757.
- (12) 1758. *Llwybr Hyffordd y Plentyn Bach i Fywyd tragwyddol*.
- (13) 1760. *Pregeth, yn dangos beth yw Natur ac Anian y Pechod yn erbyn yr Yspryd Glan*.

This long list shows how vigorous and industrious a man he was, but it is his *Drych y Prif Oesoedd* alone on which his reputation as a Welsh writer rests. It claimed to be a 'History of the Welsh People from the earliest times,' and was divided into two parts, the contents of which are as follows:

RHAN I. Sy'n traethu am hen Ach y Cymru, o ba le y daethant allan: Y Rhyfeloedd a fu rhyngddynt a'r Rhufeiniaid, Y Brithwyr, ac a'r Saeson. Eu Moesau gynt, cyn troi yn Gristianogion.

RHAN II. Sy'n traethu am Bregethiad a Chynnydd yr Efengyl ym Mrydain: Athrawiaeth y Brif Eglwys. Moesau'r Prif Gristnogion.

This remarkable book has gone through twenty editions; the last was published under the auspices of the Guild of Graduates in 1902, and edited by Mr. S. J. Evans, M.A.

The *Drych* is a work which must have involved considerable labour in its preparation, and was written with such apparent regard to authorities for almost every detail the author mentions, that it is not surprising that for a considerable time it was looked upon as a reliable historical work. The careful way in which he weighs the opinions of the different authorities mentioned by him, rejecting some and accepting others, could not fail to impress uncritical minds with the accuracy of the work, and even less credulous minds would often feel reassured by the appearance of such an array of testimony. It shows the



author's mind was a strange mixture of credulity and incredulity, for what he rejects, and what he accepts, are both in many instances equally fabulous.

Probably his appeal to the imagination of his countrymen, and his power of vivid description, had more to do with the success of the book than its recognition as accurate history. The story is well told throughout, and the reader feels himself an eye-witness to the events related.

If Theophilus Evans had any aim in the preparation of this book besides an historical one, it would seem to be to show the dangers of disunion, bearing in mind, particularly, the theological unrest of his day, for the Church to which he belonged was threatened on both sides—by Deism on the one, and Nonconformity on the other. He was fully alive to both dangers, and attacked them in turn. But his very close proximity to the Revival movement, which he regarded as inimical to the best interests of the Church, as he conceived them, led him to believe this the predominant danger. The strength of the movement seriously perplexed him, and he wrote in the strain of one foretelling ruin and disaster if his countrymen broke away from the religious conditions which had hitherto obtained amongst them. To him they were as much God's chosen race as the Israelites had been of old, and to break away from what he himself calls 'the Primitive Church restored in these later times' was as serious a sin as Israel's backslidings had ever been. Hence his warnings are numerous, and, there can be little doubt, he seriously believed them.

His attitude towards the Revival movement is amply evidenced in his work, and it is suggested that he was responsible for Williams Pantycelyn's prohibition, and his rejection by his Bishop as a candidate for priest's orders.

This is not definitely known, but it is quite in keeping with the energy he showed in combating what he regarded as zeal without knowledge.

What must ever remain to his credit is that he did as much as any man of his day for the preservation of the Welsh language, and in this matter he was not in accord with the prevailing ecclesiastical opinion in high quarters. All his books, with one exception, were issued for his countrymen's benefit, and the number of editions the *Drych* has gone through, shows their appreciation of his work despite the fact that Goronwy Owen reckoned him a 'babbler.'

His style of writing preserves the harmony so dear to the Cymric ear, and he very seldom indulges in an idiom alien to the language. It is true that his orthography is by no means consistent, but this was a common fault then, as now. He is not so trenchant or so careful a writer as Elis Wyn, but his powers of description will vie with those of any Welsh writer.

**Simon Thomas**, a native of Cilgwyn, Cardiganshire, who lived at Hereford from 1730 to 1746 as 'a mercer' and 'Presbyterian minister,' published in 1718 the first edition of his *Hanes y Byd a'r Amseroedd*. This work rivalled even *Drych y Prif Oesoedd* in popularity in the eighteenth century, the sixth edition appearing in 1799. It is written in good Welsh, and the style and matter are popular. He also published *Histori yr Heretic Pelagius* in 1735, and *Deonglydd yr ysgrythyrau* in 1741, and the *History of the Cymbri* and several other works in English. He, like Lewis Morris after him, set up a printing press in his own house, and issued some of his own and other works from this press. He was an uncle of the Rev. Joshua Thomas, who in his early days served his apprenticeship

with him, and may have acquired his taste for history from his uncle. The dates of Simon Thomas's birth and death are not yet ascertained.

**Joshua Thomas** (1719-1797) was born at Tyhen, Caio, Carmarthenshire, in 1719, and was educated at private schools in the neighbourhood of his home. He was apprenticed as a mercer with his uncle, Simon Thomas, in 1738, and was called and ordained to the Baptist ministry in 1749, and settled for life at Leominster Baptist Church in 1754, where he also kept a school. He translated several works treating on the controversial subjects of his time, but his fame in Welsh Literature will always be associated with his *Hanes y Bedyddwyr, ymhlith y Cymry o Amser yr Apostolion, hyd y flwyddyn hon*, published in 1778. He devoted over thirty years of laborious research to this work. He is not, like Theophilus Evans, a brilliant writer, full of fire and eloquence, bordering on poetry, but he has the simple and lucid narrative style to perfection. The absolute fairness and impartiality, and the love of truth manifested in the treatment of the controversial subjects of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, are worthy of all the praises which have been bestowed on this *Hanes*. It is a storehouse of reliable facts and delightful reading. Joshua Thomas published also a *History of the Baptist Association in Wales* 1650-1790, in 1797, and died on August 25 of that year universally respected.

**Daniel Rowland** (1713-1790) of Llangeitho was the son of a vicar of Llangeitho and Llancwnlle, of the same name, and he was born in Pant y Beudy in the latter parish in 1713. He was educated at Hereford Grammar School, and after his ordination, he first served the curacy of Llangeitho where his brother was vicar; and it is a curious fact in his



career in the church, that he subsequently became curate to his own son. He came under the influence of Griffith Jones, Llanddowror, and could not tie himself to any particular sphere of work, because he conceived it his mission to become an itinerant preacher of the Gospel, and he passed from place to place rousing the religious enthusiasm of his countrymen wherever he went. For such work as his, the Established Church had made no provision. It formed no part of her system, which was to restrict the operations of her clergy to the particular parishes or districts to which they were licensed. Her rule in this matter was uniform, and she took no cognisance of special and exceptional circumstances. So Daniel Rowland was discountenanced by her leaders, and in 1763 he was obliged to sever his connection with the Church. He died in 1790.

His first literary production was a sermon entitled *Y Llaeth Ysrydol*, 1739.

In 1742 he was one of those clergy responsible for the publication of *Sail, Dibenion, a Rheolau y Cymdeithasau neu y Cyfarfodydd Neilltuol a ddechreusant ymgynnull yn ddiweddar yng Nghymru*. A few hymns were appended to these rules, but only one of them had been composed by Rowland; but in 1744 he issued a small collection of hymns, about a third of which he himself had written. In the same year appeared a translation of uncertain authorship, but with which he is generally credited, because the introduction was written by him, entitled *Rhyfel Ysrydawol, sa wnaethpwyd gan Shaddai ar Diabolus*. The original was by Bunyan. A very interesting work was that published in 1749, which he styled *Ymddiddan rhwng Methodist Uniawn-gred ac un Camsyniol*. It is well written, and shows that Rowland possessed considerable theological



acumen ; it was directed against the faction led by Howell Harris who broke away from him in 1751.

*Acelanda neu Faes y Gwaed*, a work first published in Dutch, and translated by George Whitefield into English, was translated by Rowland into Welsh, and published in 1759.

Peter Williams was responsible for the address to his 'Annwyl Gydwladwyr' at the beginning of the *Acelanda*, and wrote also an Introduction to Rowland's next book which appeared in 1763, and was entitled *Pumtheng Araith*, from the original by T. Wetherall.

Numerous sermons were published between this and his death, the most noted being *Llais y Durtur*, and *Llwyddiant wrth Orsedd Gras*.

His death in 1790 was the occasion of several *marwnadau*, and amongst them one by Williams of Pantycelyn, who died at the end of the same year. ✓

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In the latter half of the eighteenth century the three chief contributors to prose literature were Dr. Owen Pughe, Owain Myfyr, and Iolo Morganwg, and they confined their activities chiefly to the history of the language and to antiquarian pursuits. Few dictionaries had hitherto been published, and even the best of these were meagre, and the same can be said of the grammars that had so far appeared. The study of philology had been neglected, and when it is considered that Dr. Pughe was a pioneer in this enterprise, with nothing to assist him except, perhaps, the incomplete works of Dr. Davies of Mallwyd and Edward Llwyd, some allowance must be made for the very numerous errors which crept into his work.

**Dr. Owen Pughe** (1759-1835) was born at Tynybryn,

in the parish of Llanfihangel y Pennant, in Merionethshire, in 1759. He adopted the name Pughe in 1806. Previous to that he was known either as William Owen, or by one of the bardic names he affected, *Gwilym o Feirion* or *Idrison*. When he was seven years old his parents removed to Egryn in Ardudwy, in which neighbourhood he received the rudiments of education, and afterwards proceeded to a school at Altrincham, near Manchester. In 1776 he removed to London, and it was here that he came under the notice of Owain Myfyr. He married in 1790, and had one son, Aneurin Owen, of subsequent literary fame. In 1806 he returned to Wales, and in his last years endured a painful illness. He died in The Cottage, near Tallylyn, in 1835, and was buried at Nantglyn. He was a member of the Society of Antiquaries, and Oxford University conferred upon him the degree of D.C.L., as a reward for his services to literature.

In 1789 he published jointly with Owain Myfyr *Barddoniaeth Dafydd ab Gwilym*. The volume contained about half that bard's work.

In the same year Dr. Pughe edited a *Collection of Poems* in English, and in 1792 *The Heroic Elegies and other Pieces of Llywarch Hen, Prince of the Cambrian Britons: With a Literal Translation*.

In 1800 he translated *A Cardiganshire Landlord's Advice to His Tenants*, but the translation was scarcely more intelligible than the original to the people for whom it was intended.

Dr. Pughe was also the editor of the *Cambrian Register*, which was intended to be a yearly publication, chiefly of interest to antiquarians and historians.

His most arduous undertaking was the Welsh-English Dictionary, which was published in two volumes in 1803.

The first part of the first volume was taken up by a Welsh Grammar. This remains the fullest complete Welsh Dictionary to this day. It contains nearly 100,000 words, but is a very faulty production, in spite of the great labour it must have involved. Dr. Pughe's ideas of the etymology of words were very quaint.

Another very important work which Dr. Pughe took part in editing was the *Myvyrian Archaiology*, which appeared in 1801-7. This work is invaluable, both from a literary and historical standpoint, to students of Welsh. His orthography in all his works has the following peculiarities—*v* for *f*, *f* for *ff*, *ç* for *ch*, *z* for *dd*.

The Society of the *Gwyneddigion*, jointly with that of the *Cymreigyddion*, issued in 1805 *Y Greal*, a work of considerable interest, for it contains extracts from the chief early Welsh writings, and on its covers are the first lines of the poems of numerous Welsh bards.

In 1808 Dr. Pughe published a Welsh Grammar entitled *Cadwedigaeth yr Iaith Gymraeg*.

In 1819 appeared his translation of *Paradise Lost* under the title *Coll Gwynfa*. He also translated Heber's *Palestina* and Gray's *Bard*.

It will thus be seen that Dr. Pughe, in spite of his many eccentricities, did great service to Welsh literature. He also contributed various articles to the leading magazines and periodicals, English as well as Welsh.

**Owen Jones** (1741-1814), *Owain Myfyr*, was intimately associated with Dr. Owen Pughe in the production of several of his works. He was born at Tyddyn Tudur, in the parish of Llanfihangel Glyn Myfyr, Denbighshire, in 1741, and when quite young was apprenticed to a London firm as a furrier, where he soon became a partner. He spent his leisure hours in collecting and transcribing Welsh



MSS., and his labours in this direction were untiring, as the vast quantity of material which he left behind, amounting to over thirty thousand pages of prose and verse, in addition to what had been published, testifies. He was the chief promoter of the Society of the *Gwyneddigion* in 1771, and his generosity to bards and litterateurs knew no bounds. He died in 1814, and was buried in the churchyard of Allhallows.

He assisted Dr. Owen Pughe in publishing Dafydd ab Gwilym's poems, which he says in his introduction were copied from the manuscripts of Lewis, Richard, and William Morris, and he bore the expenses of publication.

He was also one of the editors of the *Myvyrian Archaiology*, as the title of that work indicates. He bore the entire expense of this enterprise, and was the chief promoter of the quarterly publication called *Y Greal*, the first number of which appeared in June, 1805.

Renan, in his article on 'The Poetry of the Celtic Races,' has paid Owen Jones the following graceful and well-deserved tribute: 'Good works now exist which facilitate the task of him who undertakes the study of these interesting literatures. Wales, above all, is distinguished by scientific and literary activity, not always accompanied, it is true, by a very rigorous critical spirit, but deserving the highest praise. There, researches which would bring honour to the most active centres of learning in Europe, are the work of enthusiastic amateurs. A peasant called Owen Jones published in 1801-7, under the name of the *Myvyrian Archaiology of Wales*, the precious collection which is to this day the arsenal of Cymric antiquities.'

✓ **Edward Williams** (1746-1826), *Iolo Morgannwg*, who was one of the three editors of the *Myvyrian*, was born at



Llancarvan, in Glamorganshire, in 1747. He received no early education, and was brought up as a stone-mason with his father. In 1770 he went to London, and became acquainted with Owen Jones and Dr. Owen Pughe through the medium of the *Gwyneddigion* Society. An intimacy sprang up between them, and Williams during the seven years he spent in London, became interested in the same pursuits as his two friends. He returned to South Wales in 1777, and devoted himself to transcribing manuscripts in all the libraries of Wales to which he could obtain access. He was also one of the chief promoters of the *Eisteddfod* that was held at Carmarthen in 1819, and was himself a bard of some attainments.

In 1772 he had published *Dagrau yr Awen*, an elegy upon the bard Lewis Hopkin, and in 1793 an English translation in verse of one of Dafydd ab Gwilym's odes to Morfudd, which he entitled *The Fair Pilgrim*. In 1794, two volumes of English poetry entitled *Poems, Lyric and Pastoral*, issued from his pen.

In 1812 he published *Salmau yr Eglwys yn yr Anialwch*, which went through a second edition in 1827 issued by his son Taliesin.

The greatest service he rendered to his country was his share in the work of collecting and editing the materials for the *Myvyrian Archæology*. This he was enabled to do through the liberality of Owen Jones who furnished the entire funds for this big undertaking.

He left several MSS. unpublished at the time of his death in 1826. His edition of *Cyfrinach Beirdd Ynys Prydain* was published by his son Taliesin in 1829. Other material which he had meant to issue as an Appendix to the *Myvyrian* was published by the Welsh MSS. Society, under the title *The Iolo Manuscripts*, in

1848. It was from his manuscript collections that Ab Ithel found the materials for his *Barddas*.

Iolo Morganwg died in 1826, and must be admitted one of the most industrious of those 'enthusiastic amateurs' whom Renan refers to. Much of his work lacks accuracy, and some of his pretensions relating to the bardic fraternity will not bear scrutiny. The marvel is, that with his slender educational advantages, his mistakes were not more numerous. He lacked the critical faculty, but his unremitting labours have supplied his countrymen with plenty of material upon which to exercise it.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE BARDS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

#### I

**Goronwy Owen.**—This famous Welsh poet was born in 1722 in a small cottage called *Y Dafarn Goch*, in the parish of *Llanfair Mathafarn Eithaf*, in the county of Anglesey. He was baptized on January 1, 1723. His father, *Owen Goronwy* or *Gronow*, a tinker by trade, was a drunken, worthless fellow, and it was to his mother *Sian Parri*, an uncultured but high-souled woman of that type which has been the very salt of this country, that the boy looked for encouragement in that pursuit of knowledge which was to him from his very earliest years a burning passion. It is thought that his education began at the small village school at *Llanallgo*, about two miles from his home. His industry and intelligence attracted the attention of a well-known local family, the *Morris*s of *Pentre Eirianell*. *Margaret Morris* and her three sons, *Lewis*, *Richard*, and *William*, assisted the poor lad generously, and he certainly needed all the help he could get at this time, for in 1733, when he was only eleven years old, his brave-hearted mother died, and he was left to the tender mercies of his dissolute father, who married again, and the boy suffered such discomforts that he had perforce to leave home. For the next four years little is known of him, but having spent some time at *Botwnnog School*, in 1737 he entered *Friars' School*, *Bangor*, where

he remained until 1741, prosecuting his studies with all diligence, as his future career shows. His ambition was to go to Oxford, and to return as an ordained clergyman to the land that gave him birth; but for one year, owing to lack of funds, he accepted a post as usher in a school at Pwllheli. In 1742, however, he succeeded in an application he had made for the Dr. Lewis Charity, which was designed to assist poor boys in their education, and was admitted in that year to Jesus College, Oxford, where he took his degree in 1745, and was ordained in the same year. Then began his career of disappointment. He desired a sphere of work in Anglesey, and was very gratified to hear of a vacant curacy at his old home parish. He applied for it, and was offered it by the Bishop of Bangor's chaplain, in the absence of his lordship, but he only spent three short weeks there, for Bishop Hutton wrote to his chaplain directing him to give the curacy to the Rev. John Ellis of Carnarvon, 'a young clergyman of very great fortune.' It was a cruel blow to Goronwy, and after spending a year with some friends in Denbighshire, in the vain hope that some work could be found for him in Wales, he was forced to cross the border; his only subsequent visit to this country was when he came to St. Asaph to receive priest's orders in 1747.

He found a curacy at Oswestry, where he remained for about three years, and there in 1747 he married Elen, the daughter of Owen Hughes, an alderman of that town.

In 1748 he left Oswestry and accepted the curacy of Uppington near Shrewsbury, where he added to his very slender income by teaching in a school at Donnington. His vicar at this place, who was named Douglas, afterwards became Bishop of Carlisle, and was subsequently translated to Salisbury.



He employed his leisure at Donnington in studying Oriental languages, and it was while serving this curacy that he wrote his famous poem, *Cywydd y Farn Fawr*.

In 1753, through the efforts of William Morris, he obtained the curacy of Walton, near Liverpool, which was a little more remunerative, and Goronwy had now a growing family.

He wrote very little poetry during his stay here, for reasons which are given elsewhere, but his pen was not altogether idle, for most of his thoughtful and instructive letters were written here.

He liked the place so little that he removed to London in 1755, in the rather uncertain, and, as it transpired, unfounded hope of obtaining from the Cymmrodorion the chaplaincy of the Welsh church there. In consequence he remained idle for some months, and went through the unfortunate experience of living in a London garret, and he would have fared even worse had not the Morrisises come to his rescue. He seems to have produced no work during that period, except *Cywydd y Nenawr*, in which he tries not to complain of his garret overmuch, but consoles himself that it shelters him from the evils of the city. Its opening lines are, however, very ironical :

Croesaw i'm diginiaw gell,  
Gras Dofydd ! gorau 'sdafell ;  
Golygle a gwawl eglur,  
Derchafiad Offeiriad ffur.

Fortunately, he succeeded before the year was out in obtaining the curacy of Northolt, about twelve miles from London, where he managed to live in comparative comfort, and his favourite relaxation was to fish in the river Brent.

It is thought, however, that its proximity to London,

where he met many friends from time to time, had a demoralising effect upon him, and that he gave way to drink at this time. It is certain that the friendship of Lewis Morris cooled towards him, and seeing that his chances of preferment were small, he thought it wise to accept an offer of a post as tutor at Williamsburg, Virginia, at a stipend of £200 a year.

He sailed in December 1757, in a ship called the *Trial*, surely a significant name, for on the passage out he lost his wife and his youngest son.

At Williamsburg he married the sister of the Principal of the College, but she died in less than a year.

From this point, the story of his life becomes rather obscure, but in 1760 he resigned his tutorship in the school and was appointed Rector of St. Andrews, Brunswick County. He remained there until his death in 1769.

It was not until 1763 that any of his works were published. In that year appeared a book entitled *Diddanwch Teuluaidd*, which contained some of his poems, together with others by Anglesey bards who were members of the *Cymmrodorion*.

In 1810, Dafydd Ddu Eryri published some of his poems in *Corff y Gainc*.

In 1817, more of his poems appeared in *Diddanwch Teuluaidd*, published at Carnarvon.

In 1860, a collection of his poems and letters made by J. Jones of Llanrwst appeared under the title *Gronoviana*.

In 1876, the Rev. Robert Jones of Rotherhithe published an excellent edition of his works, entitled *The Poetical Works of Goronwy Owen, with his Life and Correspondence*.

In 1877, Mr. Isaac Foulkes of Liverpool published *Barddoniaeth Goronwy Owen*, and in 1895 an edition of

his Letters. These have since gone through many editions.

The late Dr. Lewis Edwards said that to praise Goronwy Owen's work was as superfluous as to paint the lily. No poet more tasteful, classical, and lofty in conception has appeared in Welsh literature. He wrote prose also with equal taste, and about all his work is the finish of the skilled artist and the accomplished scholar. The richness and variety of his vocabulary, and his delicate handling of words, are quite unique. He deals, too, with a variety of subjects with equal success.

His love-poems, of which *Calendr y Carwr* is a fair example, compare favourably with the best of those written by Dafydd ab Gwilym. The power of a maiden's smile and the beauty of her face always appealed to him, and he could describe them with a felicity unsurpassed by any other Welsh bard. He sang to his *Mari fwyd* :

Wyf glwyfus nid a gleifwaith.  
Gwnaeth meinwen a gwên y gwaith.

Teg yw dy wên, gangen gu,  
Wyneb rhy deg i wenu.

When he turned his attention to a serious subject he attained a sublimity and dignity of expression seldom equalled. *Cywydd y Farn Fawr* is the best example of this, and it is generally admitted that it is the finest poem he ever penned. So vast a subject required all the strength of portraiture which a great artist could summon to his aid. He well understood the greatness of the undertaking, as he indicates in the opening lines :

Dod ym dy nawdd, a hawdd hynt,  
 Duw hael, a deau helynt ;  
 Goddau f'armerth, o'm nerthyd,  
 Yw Dydd Barn a diwedd byd.

One writer has suggested that he has not worked out the personal element to advantage in this poem, but in spite of this he has given an inspiring picture of the majesty of the Judge, and the expectancy and awe of the judged. The coming of the Judge is thus described :

Yno'r Glyw, Ner y gloywnef,  
 A ferchyg yn eurfyg nef !  
 Dyrcha'n uchel ei helynt,  
 A gwân adenydd y gwynt ;  
 A'i angylion gwynion, gant,  
 Miloedd yn eilio moliant.  
 Rhoir gawr nerthol, a dolef,  
 Mal clych, yn entrych y nef ;  
 Llef mawr goruwch llif môr-ryd,  
 Uwch dyfroedd aberoedd byd.  
 Gosteg a roir, ac Ust ! draw  
 Dwrf rhaiadr, darfu rhuaw ;  
 Angel a gân, hoywlan lef,  
 Felyslais, nefawl oslef ;  
 Wrth ei fant, groywber gantawr,  
 Gesyd ei gorn, mingorn mawr ;  
 Corn anfeidrol ei ddolef,  
 Corn ffraeth o saerniaeth nef.

The versification of *Cywydd y Farn* was criticised because it contained more lines in *cynghanedd lusg* and *sain* than any other, Goronwy defended himself against this in a letter to Richard Morris in 1753, in which he says: 'I am not able to comprehend how that comes to be a fault. Had any one taken it into his head to carry on such a piece of criticism on one of his eclogues in



Pope's day, he would have had an honourable place in the *Dunciad* for it.' At the same time he accepts the criticism with all modesty, and adds: 'I had no other guide but uncultivated nature, no critic but my own ear, no rule or scale but my own fingers' ends, until you, out of mere pity, were pleased to give me some useful hints.'

His strong love of country and yearning for his native land are expressed in *Cywydd Ateb i anerch Huw ap Huw*, and in his *Cywydd Hiraeth am Fôn*. In both of them he breathes a spirit of longing for his island home, something akin to that of the captive Jews who wept by the waters of Babylon, as he reminds us. After describing the grief of the exiled Israelite, he compares it with his own in these powerful and pathetic lines:

Llyna ddiwael Israeliad !  
 Anwyl oedd i hwn ei wlad ;  
 Daear Mon, dir i minnau  
 Yw, o chaf ffun i'w choffau.  
 Mawr fy nghwynfan am dani ;  
 Mal Seion yw Môn i mi ;  
 O f'einioes ni chaf fwyniant  
 Heb Fôn, er na thôn na thant ;  
 Nid oes trysor a ddorwn,  
 Na byd da'n y bywyd hwn,  
 Na dail llwyn, na dillynion,  
 Na byw hwy, onibai hon.

He describes his quest for happiness in a very fine *cywydd* entitled *Y Maen Gwerthfawr*, and confesses that he has found it only in *Efengyl Duw*. He had searched far and wide, as he says:

Chwilio yman am dani,  
 Chwilio hwnt heb ei chael hi.

Pond tlawd y ddihirffawd hon,  
Chwilio gem, a chael gwmon.

But when he has found it, he exclaims with heartfelt satisfaction :

Dyma gysur pur heb ball,  
Goruwch a ddygai arall.

At times he was capable of writing in a strain of mockery and satire of such excessive bitterness, that it has a tendency to enlist our sympathy with the person who comes under his stinging lash. An ode of this nature is his *Cywydd i Ddiawl*, which some have surmised was directed against Lewis Morris when the bard quarrelled with him. If this poem can be taken as an index to his character, it marks him as a man as strong to hate as he was to love. He overwhelms his enemy with opprobrium, and paints him in such dark hues that he advises Satan himself to have nothing to do with him.

If Goronwy sank into the degradation which Lewis Morris hints at, it must have been the result of despair, for apparently he had at one time a high conception of his work and responsibility. He writes :

Deg Ion, os gweinidog wyf,  
Digwl y gweinidogwyf ;  
Os mawredd yw coledd cail,  
Bagad gofalon bugail ;  
Ateb a fydd rhywddydd rhaid  
I'r Ion am lawer enaid.  
I atebol nid diboen,  
Od oes 'Barch,' dwys yw y boen.

There is every reason to believe that in Goronwy's case 'hope deferred' had made 'the heart sick.' There is an air

of dejection apparent in many of his lines when he writes of his country :

Cerais fy ngwlad geinfad gu,  
Cerais, ond ofer caru.

Few passages are more striking than that in which, in the intensity of his longing, he calls upon the waves to be silent that Môn may hear his last words :

Gorthaw don, dig wrthyd wyf,  
Llifant, distewch tra llefwyf :  
Clyw Fôn, na bo goelion gau,  
Nag anwir, fyth o'm genau ;  
Gwiried Ion a egorwyf,  
Dan Ner, canys Dewin wyf.

He then proceeds to address his country in tender words of farewell. He sees her, indeed, to use the words of the old Hebrew seer, 'on a throne high and lifted up' :

Eistedd ar orsedd eursail  
Yr wyd, ac ni welir ail.

He describes the beauty of the 'queenly isle' and all her riches, in lines so full of intensity of feeling that they show that had he employed his muse on something other than the abstractions which he compelled himself to adhere to, he might have risen to heights which would leave him in undisputed supremacy amongst Welsh poets. As it is, the premier position is disputed by Dafydd ab Gwilym.

Goronwy was not the poet of his age, and he was certainly not appreciated in his lifetime. This was due to the fact that he was a reformer in the realms of poetry. He wished to return to the severer metres and diction of the old bards, because he conceived that the *penillion telyn*, which was the form of poetry popular with his countrymen

in his day, were degrading to any true conception of the poet's art. Therefore it was that he refused to pander to it in the least degree. The Elisha Gowers he regarded with the utmost contempt, and he belaboured the *beirdd bol clawdd*, as he termed them, without mercy. He has them in mind when he exclaims :

Gwae ddiles gywyddoliaeth,  
Gwae fydd o'i awenydd waeth.

One often wonders whether this was the secret of his misunderstanding with Lewis Morris. He never meant any of his shafts to penetrate the bosom of his life-long friend and helper, and he professed an admiration for his poetry, but Morris himself was of the fraternity of the *diles gywyddoliaeth*, although superior to the majority of them when he chose to write chaste verse, and Goronwy never reckoned him amongst them. But if he was at all sensitive, he could not be oblivious to the blows directed at the school of poetry he represented.

Goronwy purposely used words which were not in popular use, in order to educate the people to them, and to preserve that purity of vocabulary which seemed to him to be threatened by the loose terms which were so current at the time, and by the large admixture of English, whose encroachments on the language he was determined to resist. In such a work as the *Bardd Cwsc* he recognised the ideal to be aimed at in point of language, and the influence of that work upon his own writings is quite evident. In the realm of poetry, he was what Elis Wyn had been amongst prose writers. His own prose, too, was robust.

In a letter to Richard Morris, written in 1753, he gave expression to the object he had in writing: 'I conceive



some hopes of the possibility of *retrieving the ancient splendour of our language*,<sup>1</sup> . . . by laying open its worth and beauty to strangers, and publishing something in it that is curious and will bear perusing in succeeding ages.'

And to William Morris in the same year he wrote: 'I am under no manner of concern about my works. It is equal to me whether they are printed, or continue as I have written them for eighty or a hundred years longer. Let them take their chance, and shift for themselves, and share the common fate of all sublunary things. If I have not a better immortality than they can procure me, I had even as good have none. *Yet they, amongst others, may help to preserve our language to posterity*<sup>1</sup>; and so far, and no further, a wise man and a lover of his country ought to regard them.'

His indignation against those who adulterated the language knew no bounds, and Dafydd ab Gwilym himself does not escape scathing criticism, but not so much as those well-intentioned but ill-advised people who attempted to *improve* that great bard's work.

Goronwy writes: 'I wish people were once so far in their right minds as to think they could not mend Dafydd ap Gwilym's works; then they would certainly never mar them. Dafydd ab Gwilym, it is true, had his foibles, as well as other mortals. He was extravagantly fond of filching an English word now and then, and inserting them in his works, which makes me wonder what should induce the judicious Dr. Davies to pitch upon him as the standard of pure Welsh. Whereas he, of all others of that age, seems least deserving of the honour. I know that that babbler, Theophilus Evans, author of *Drych y Prif*

<sup>1</sup> The italics are not the bard's.

*Oesoedd*, pretends to say that “Davy” understood never a word of English; but the way he goes about to prove his bare-faced assertion is a sufficient confutation of it, and enough to make the bold assertor ridiculous to boot. How many English words are there to be met with, in those fragments of his only, that are quoted by Dr. Davies? *Mwtlai* is one of them; and what is that else but the English word “mottley”? Is *lifrai* a pure Welsh word? And what can you make of *habrisiwn*, *mên*, and *threbl*, and a great many more?’

Sufficient has been quoted to show Goronwy’s attitude towards his language. He aimed at nothing less than absolute purity, and in this light his own severity of diction can be understood. This was a noble ideal, but it was too restrictive, and not always practical, as Dafydd ab Gwilym had had the penetration to discern.

It is also interesting to know the criticism of so great an authority as Goronwy Owen, upon the metres and *cynghanedd*. Writing to Richard Morris in 1754, he says: ‘I find that all the metres, despised and antiquated as they are, were really what all compositions of that nature should be—viz. lyric verses adapted to the tunes and music then in use. Of this sort were the several kinds of *Englynion*, *Cywyddau*, *Odlau*, *Gwawdodyn*, *Toddaid*, *Trybedd y Myneich*, and *Clogyrnach*, which to any one person of understanding and genius that way inclined, will appear to have in their composition the authentic stamp of genuine lyric poetry, and of true primitive antiquity. As to the rest—I mean *Gorchest y Beirdd*, *Hupynt hir a byr*—the newest, and falsely thought the most ingenious and accurate—I look upon them to be rather depravations than improvements in our poetry; being really invented by a set of conceited fellows void of

all taste, and at a time when the tunes of the ancient metres were no more known than those of the odes of Horace are now. What a wretched, low, grovelling thing that *Gorchest y Beirdd* is, I leave you to judge. And I would, at the same time, have an impartial answer, whether the old despised, exterminated, and, I had almost said, persecuted *Englyn Milwr*, has not something in it of antique majesty in its composition. Now, for goodness' sake, when I have a mind to write good sense in such a metre as *Gorchest y Beirdd*, and so begin, and the language itself does not afford words that will come in to finish with sense and *cynghanedd* too, what must I do? Why, to keep *cynghanedd* I must talk nonsense to the end of the metre; as my predecessors in poetry were used to do to their immortal shame, and cramp and fetter good sense, while the Dictionary is all overturned and tormented to find out words of like ending, sense or nonsense. And besides, suppose our language were more short, comprehensive, and significant than it is—which we have neither reason nor room to wish—what abundance of mysterious sense is such a horrid, jingling metre of such a length able to contain? an Iliad in a nutshell, as they say. In short, as I understand that it and its fellows were introduced by the authority of an *Eisteddfod*, I wish we had an *Eisteddfod* again to give them a *dimittimus* to some peaceable acrostic land, to sport and converse with the spirit of deceased puns, quibbles, and conundrums of pious memory. Then should I gladly see the true primitive metres reinstated in their ancient dignity.'

Those were his views upon versification, but he claimed no monopoly of wisdom in giving expression to them, and wished in this, as in other things, to leave every man to his own taste. In a passage in which he has declared his



opinion that Gwalchmai far excelled Dafydd ab Gwilym, he hastens to add: 'I claim no sovereignty over any man's judgment, but would be glad to have the liberty of judging for myself.'

So far, the quotations from his very interesting letters have been in English, but an example or two must be given of his vigorous Welsh prose. Writing to William Morris to apologise for not having composed a *cywydd* to Gwyl Dewi in 1754, he expresses himself thus: 'Och fi! Wrth son am yr Awen, y mae hithau wedi marw hefyd; neu o'r lleiaf, ar ei marw-ysgafn; ac ni bydd byw 'chwaith yn hir. Hi a'm cywilyddiodd dros fyth, gan fethu ohoni wneuthur cywydd nag awdl i'r Tywysog wyl Dewi diwedda. Ond paham imi feio ar yr Awen? Oerfel yr hin, a noethni'r wlad oerllom yma, oedd ar y bai. Dyna'r pethau a fagasant y peswch, a'r peswch oedd mam y pigyn, a'r ddau hynny rhyngddynt a'm lladdasant yn ddifeth, oni bai borth Duw a chyffyriau meddygon.'

This letter is interesting too, because of the light it throws on the bard's life at Walton. He was evidently quite out of harmony with his surroundings, and in bad health at the time. To add to his sorrows, it was here a few months later that he lost his only daughter, whom he laments in that beautiful *Marwnad Unig Ferch y Bardd*, from which the following lines are taken:

Mae cystudd rhy brudd i'm bron  $\frac{\sim}{1}$ hyd f'wyneb

Rhed afonydd heilltion;

Collais Elin, liw hinon,

Fy ngeneth oleubleth lon.

Anwylyd, oleubryd lân,

Angyles, gynnes ei gwên,

Oedd euriaith mabiaith o'i min,

Eneth liw ser (ni thâl son)



Oedd fwyn llais, addfain ei llun,  
Afieithus groesawus sŵn  
Iw Thad ; ys ymddifad Ddyn !

Ymddifad ei Thad, a thwnn  
Archoll yn ei friwdoll fron,  
Ynghur digysur, da gwnn,  
Yn gaeth o'm hiraeth am honn.

There is little wonder that a bard who could write such refined verse as Goronwy Owen was fired with indignation against that school of poetasters which had the ear of the public in his day. Half in anger, and half in humorous contempt, he wrote about two such rhymers in 1755 the following letter to William Morris : 'Tân a'm twymo onid digrif o gorffyn yw Elisha Gowper. Mae'n sicr gennyf ped fuasai'r hychrug arnaf, yn lle'r cryd poeth, na buasai raid im wrth amgen meddyginiaeth nag englynion Elis. Dyn glew iawn yw Dafydd Sion Dafydd o Drefriw, ond ei fod yn brin o wybodaeth. Mi welaf nas gwn amcan daear pa beth yw toddaid, oblegid ei fod yn galw y gadwyn hanerog yn ei englynion yn doddaid.'

Posterity, to the judgment of which Goronwy was content to leave his works, has certainly begun to appreciate them. If anything were wanting to prove his acumen, we have it in the length of time he mentioned, eighty to a hundred years, for which he was content to remain in oblivion. It shows, too, that he knew and trusted the ultimate literary verdict of his countrymen. He understood their aspirations better than they did themselves at the time, and subsequent ages have given him the reward which his faith has deserved—a reward which, no doubt, future generations will continue to increase. But Wales must needs always sigh for the treatment her great son received, not indeed at her hands, but at the hands of

those to whom was committed the destiny of this unfortunate man, who, had he been indulged in his own wish to live upon her soil and breathe his native air, might have done infinitely more for her enlightenment and advancement, and laid her under a deeper debt of obligation to him, than that which she owes him already, great as it is.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE BARDS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

#### II

**Lewis Morris** (1700-1779) (Llewelyn Ddu o Fôn) did a greater service to Welsh literature by assisting men like Goronwy Owen and Ieuan Brydydd Hir, and giving their fine talents an opportunity to develop, than by any contributions directly his own. He was the son of Morys ab Rhisiart Morys, by his wife Margaret, the daughter of Morys Owen of Bodafon y Glyn, Llanfihangel Tre'r Beirdd, Anglesey; their other two sons being Richard and William Morris, 'tri mab o ddoniau tra-mawr,' as Goronwy Owen called them. He was born in 1700, and therefore was twenty-two years senior to that bard. There is no record of his having received a careful education, but the fact that he and his brother Richard, who was chief clerk in the Navy Office, were such ardent supporters of literature, shows that a taste for it had been cultivated somewhere. Richard Morris was president of the *Cymmrodorion* Society, and supervised at least two editions of the Welsh Bible. He died in London in 1779, and was buried at St. George in the East. William Morris was an officer of Customs at Holyhead. He transcribed much of the work of the old bards, and was a great student of botany and natural philosophy. He died in 1766, and was buried, it is thought, at St. Cybi's, Holyhead.

Lewis Morris after following his father's trade for some time, gave it up and turned to land-surveying. In 1737 he was appointed by the Admiralty to survey the harbours and coasts of Wales, and as a result a work of his was published in 1748, under the title *Plans of Harbours, Bars, Bays, and Roads in St. George's Channel*.

In 1735 he set up the first printing-press in North Wales, at Holyhead. He meant to issue in parts *Tlysau yr Hen Oesoedd*, but only one number appeared and the experiment failed through lack of support. In 1751 there was issued by him *A Short History of the Crown Manor of Creuthyn, in the County of Cardigan*. Another book entitled *Rhodd Meistr i'w Brentis*, by Lewis Morris, was published in 1751. It contained instructions in the arts of japanning, husbandry, dyeing, and joinery, as well as medical advice for the treatment of animals and man.

Lewis Morris spent most of his leisure in the compilation of numerous manuscripts which remain in the British Museum as monuments of his industry. That which he entitled *Celtic Remains*, which was published by Silvan Evans in 1878, is considered one of the most important.

It would have enhanced the reputation of Lewis Morris if he had restricted himself to prose, for his poems were very inferior, although Goronwy Owen and Ieuan Brydydd Hir acknowledged him as their bardic teacher. The former wrote on one occasion, 'Llywelyn Ddu o Fôn yw pen bardd Cymru oll.' When he did so, he must have had in mind the capacity of the man whom he knew so well, and not the trashy, immoral productions which most of his poems are.

Forty-six of them were published in the *Diddanwch Teuluaid* in 1763 by Hugh Jones of Llangwm.

His best poem is considered to be *Caniad y Gôg i*



*Feirionydd*, but it is of no particular merit. It is with the *matter* of his poems rather than their form that fault must be found. His mastery of the language, and of the laws of *cynghanedd*, showed considerable talent. Would that they had been employed on loftier themes!

Richard Morris composed but little poetry, except the rather lengthy *cywydd* on the death of Queen Caroline. He published two editions of the Bible, 1746 and 1752, and a second edition of a Welsh-English Dictionary ✓ entitled *Y Gymraeg yn ei Disgleirdeb*, by Thomas Jones. It had first appeared in 1688, and was corrected and enlarged by Richard Morris. In 1770 he published a very fine volume of *Y Llyfr Gweddi Gyffredin*, which sold for two guineas. There are in the British Museum many manuscripts of Welsh poems which were transcribed by him. He died in 1779.

**William Williams of Pantycelyn** (1717-1791) ✓ was a Carmarthenshire man, and was born near Pantycelyn, Llanfair-ar-y-bryn in that county, in 1717. He was intended for the medical profession, but the influence of Howell Harris's preaching decided him in favour of the Church. In 1740 he was ordained by Bishop Clagett of St. David's, and licensed to the curacy of Llanwrtyd and Abergwesyn. He resigned it, however, in 1743, having been refused ordination as a priest, and joined Howell Harris and Daniel Rowland in their movement. ✓

He is best known in Welsh literature as a great hymnologist, but was also a translator of many religious works, and the writer of numerous elegies. Charles Ashton gives ✓ a list of no less than seventy-four books, pamphlets, and *marwnadau* for which he was responsible. The popularity of most of his works is shown by the numerous editions of them issued.

The Rev. Kilsby Jones brought out in 1867 *Holl Weithiau Prydyddawl a Rhyddieithol Williams Pantycelyn*, and Dr. Cynhafal Jones issued his works in two volumes entitled *Gweithiau Williams Pantycelyn*, the first in 1887, and the second in 1891.

In most of his prose writings he adopts the conversational method, as better calculated to chain the attention of his readers. He is a facile writer, and his arguments are generally strong and persuasive. His prose effort which shows most research and a careful and powerful judgment is that entitled *Pantheologia*.

His longest poetical compositions are those called *Golwg ar Deyrnas Crist* and *Bywyd a Marwolaeth Theomemphus*. The first is in six parts, but the unity of the whole is perfect, and some stanzas fall little short of poetic excellence. The whole *pryddest* is written in the same metre, but it is relieved from monotony by the lofty and sometimes daring conceptions of the author. Nevertheless, he treats his great subject with the utmost reverence, and there are passages in it which kindle the religious emotions as nothing else in the language can. Gwilym Hiraethog, who was not afraid to compare this poem with *Paradise Lost*, although he acknowledges the incomparable excellence of the latter in many respects, points out Williams's power in this direction. He writes: 'Par athrylith Milton i ni ymgrymu yn wylaidd ger ei bron, . . . Williams a gyffyrdda â holl dannau eich ymysgaroedd—gyr eich calon i losgi ynoch yn ddiarwybod i chwi.'

*Bywyd a Marwolaeth Theomemphus* is written in twenty parts, each part containing further sub-divisions. *Theomemphus* bears a strong resemblance to Bunyan's *Christian*. An outline of his life before his conversion is given, his conviction of sin by *Boanerges*, his temptations, his fears,

his meeting with false teachers, his confirmation in the faith, and his death. The treatment of the subject is somewhat unequal, but some parts are of transcendent merit ; for example, the lines from *Evangelius's* sermon :

O, enw ardderchoccaf yw enw marwol glwy !  
Caniadau archangylion a fydd fath enw mwy ;  
Bydd yr anfeidrol ddyfais o brynedigaeth dyn,  
Gan raddau floedd yno yn cael ei chanu yn un.

Williams composed thirty-three *marwnadau*, many of them upon leading men of the day, with whom he had come into direct contact in the religious revival—Daniel Rowland, Griffith Jones, Howell Harris, and others.

He composed no less than 857 hymns, many of them translations from the work of the best English hymnologists, but the majority were original. A critical examination of them betrays many faults, but in spite of that he will be acknowledged, to quote Hiraethog's words once more, as 'Peraidd ganiedydd y Cymry . . . haul ffurfafen ein caniadaeth gysegredig.'

**Thomas Edwards** (1739-1810) (Twm o'r Nant) was born in 1739 at Penparchell, in the parish of Llanefydd, Denbighshire. His parents shortly afterwards removed to a small farm called Nant, near Nantglyn. He received no educational advantages, and when he was twenty-four he married and took a small farm called Bylche, on which he contrived to keep a few horses which he employed in carrying timber ; but the venture proved unsuccessful, and he was then compelled to earn a living by labouring on different farms, or by playing interludes up and down the country, which he himself had composed. He gave this up before the end of his life and settled down as a stone-mason in the neighbourhood of Denbigh, where he died in 1810.



Owing to his ability as a writer of interludes, some have had the temerity to call him 'the Welsh Shakspeare,' but although he delineates some characters with much success, it is needless to assert that the comparison is ridiculous.

Charles Ashton arranged a list of his productions under thirty-three items, consisting of carols, ballads, dialogues, *cywyddau*, *englynion*, and numerous *cerddi*.

A selection of his works was issued by Isaac Foulkes in 1861, and enlarged editions in 1874 and 1890. In the two latter, seven interludes are included, of which *Pedair Colofn Gwladwriaeth* is considered the best, although the others are not lacking in many touches of genius in portraying different Welsh characters. Like many bards of his period he, unfortunately, often exceeds the bounds of propriety, but when this worthless stuff is winnowed from his writings, he must be acknowledged a bard of great skill. He will not compare with Goronwy Owen in the *mesurau caethion*, nor with Huw Morus and Edward Morus as a writer of carols. His reputation mainly rests upon his interludes, in which he always got the ear of the people whose cause he championed against the evils of the day.

He took part in many of the *Eisteddfodau* of the period, and sometimes refused to acknowledge the decision of the adjudicators. This was notably the case at Corwen in 1789, when Gwallter Mechain was adjudged the prize for the best extempore *englyn*. In the same year at Bala, Twm o'r Nant was again unsuccessful, in the competition for the Chair, and Gwallter was awarded the prize.

At the request of the Society of *Cymreigyddion*, the bard wrote the story of his life, which was published by them.

Many of his poems contain personal reminiscences; for instance, he relates in one a merciful escape he had when travelling with his waggon which contained a hundred and



twenty feet of timber, when the chain of the wheel attached to the drag broke as they were descending a hill. The waggon passed over his left leg and right foot 'lle cadd ef Ysictod trwm ac heb dorri un Asgwrn.' Stirring local events are related in others, and in these there is always a strong appeal to the imagination, and sometimes they work upon the credulity and superstition of the peasantry.

**Evan Evans** (1731-1781) (Ieuan Brydydd Hir) was born at Cynhawdref in the parish of Lledrod, in Cardiganshire, in 1731. He was educated at Ystrad Meurig and Merton College, Oxford, and afterwards took Orders, serving in turn the curacies of Tywyn in Merionethshire, Llanberis and Llanllechid in Carnarvonshire, and Llanfair Talhaiarn in Denbighshire. For a few years before his death in 1789 he lived on the bounty of Paul Panton, Esq., Plasgwyn, Pentraeth, to whom he promised his MSS. at his death. He acknowledged Lewis Morris as his bardic teacher, and, like Goronwy Owen, was loud in the praises of that bard.

Three of his poems, entitled respectively *Cywydd Hiraeth y Bardd am ei Wlad, Awdl i'r Parchedig Mr. William Wynne*, and *Cywydd Marwnad Frederic Tywysog Cymru*, are found in the *Dewisol Ganiadau*.

In 1764 he published an important work called *De Bardis Dissertatio*. The book is in three parts—the first in English, the second in Latin, and the third in Welsh, giving specimens of Welsh poetry in the Middle Ages, which are translated into English in the first part, whilst the second is a Latin treatise on the old bards and their work.

In 1776 he published *Casgliad o Bregethau* in two volumes. These were sermons by Doddridge, Watts, Tillotson, and others.

He had intended publishing many more books and had a vast quantity of material in manuscript, but he complained loudly of lack of support. Writing to Owen Jones, in 1779, he says of one nobleman who had promised him support, but had afterwards forgotten him, 'Y mae chwaryddion, miwsigyddion, a chwareuwyr hud a lledrith yn fwy ddywenydd ganthaw na gwŷr o ddysg.'

He had also hoped to publish a Commentary on the Old and New Testaments, but had only got as far as 1 Kings xiii., and this is contained in three MS. volumes in the British Museum. Paul Panton came into possession of a large number of his MSS. after his death.

In 1876 Canon Silvan Evans edited *Gwaith y Parchedig Evan Evans (Ieuan Brydydd Hir)*, which was published by Humphreys, Carnarvon.

One of his finest compositions is *Cywydd Hiraeth y Bardd am ei Wlad*, in which he breathes his love for his country in memorable lines, amongst which occur the following:

Gwell yw byw a gallu bod,  
 Dan wybr ein cydnabod ;  
 Na gwag gerdded o'm credir,  
 O nwyf taith i newid tir ;  
 Newid oedd annedwyddach  
 Na bro a oedd yn bur iach,  
 Newidiais ar wan adeg,  
 Wlad iawn Geredigiawn deg ;  
 Lle mae iechyd byd yn byw,  
 Dihoen a gorhoen gwiwryw

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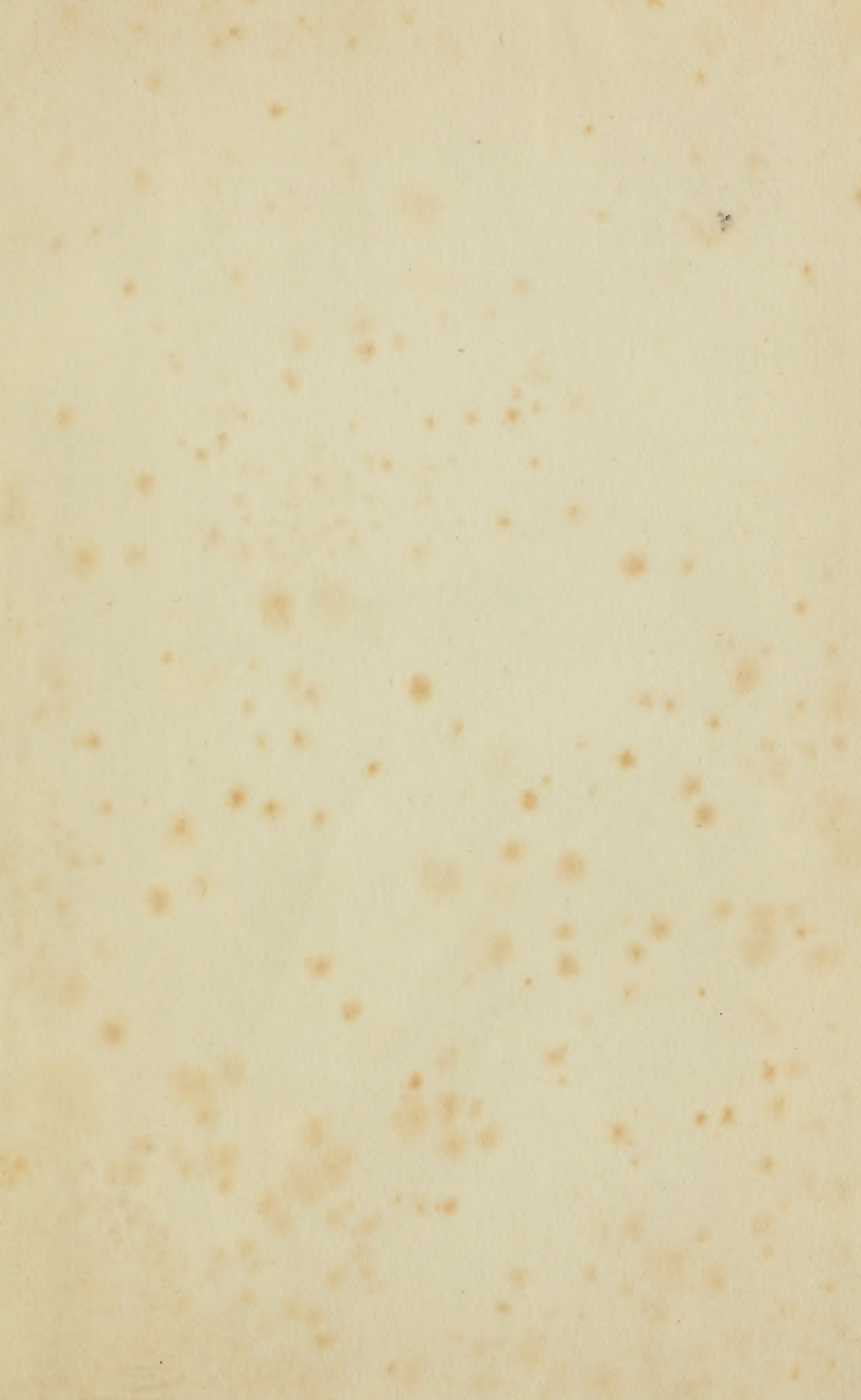
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